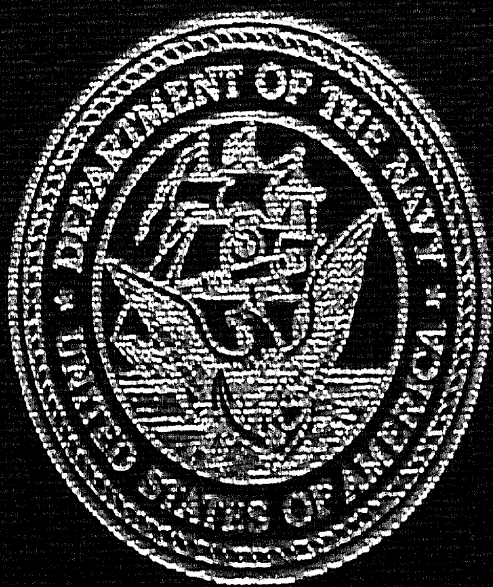
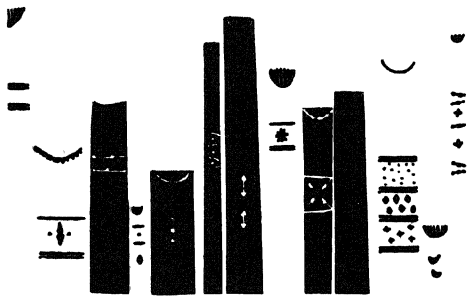

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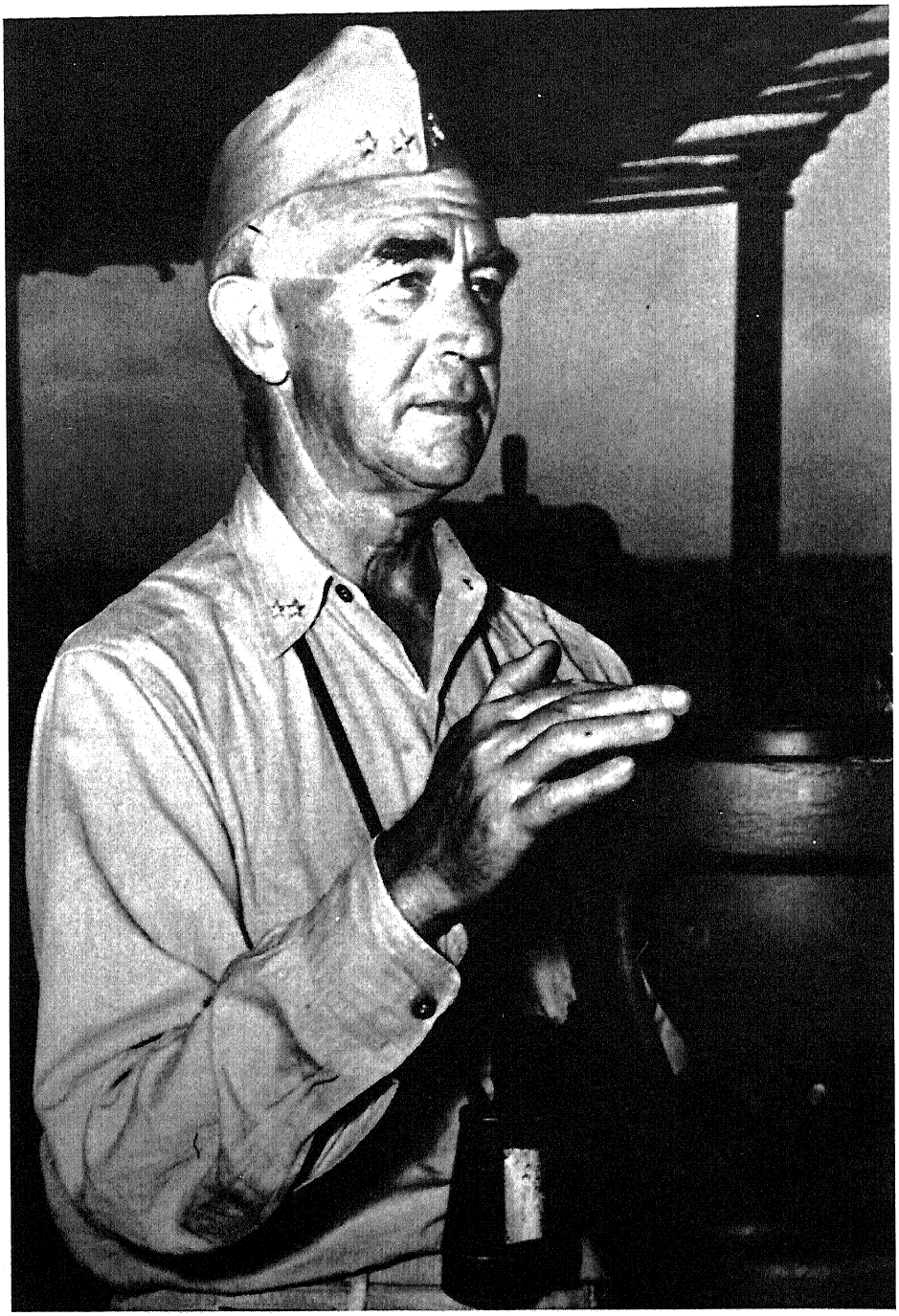
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Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner enroute to Kwajalein on board USS Rocky Mount, *January 1944.*

The Amphibians Came to Conquer

THE STORY OF
ADMIRAL
RICHMOND KELLY TURNER
II



by

VICE ADMIRAL
GEORGE CARROLL DYER
USN (Retired)

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CHAPTER XVI

To the Central Pacific and Tarawa

AUGUST 1943—BACKGROUND TO GALVANIC

During the twelve months since WATCHTOWER, not only had the amphibious forces of the Pacific Fleet grown tremendously, but the whole concept of future naval operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas had grown tremendously. The primary chore of the amphibians was to storm and occupy enemy-held islands. But the amphibians were but an important part of a whole Fleet which, while ready, able and willing to fight battles on or under the sea, in the air, or on land, was in effect an offensively minded logistical octopus bent on garrotting with its many tentacles the Japanese logistic base.

The primary mission of the Central Pacific campaign was to cut the Japanese lines of logistical movement to and from the Dutch East Indies and Southeast Asia where Japan had to obtain her essential raw materials. This mission was greatly facilitated by molding a fast moving logistical base out of the old Fleet Train. This fast moving logistical base not only could repair and restore ships, planes and men to fighting condition while on a dead run but could create new operating bases and logistical support bases when and where they were needed in the far reaches of the Pacific.

As has been related, on 15 July 1943, Rear Admiral Turner was relieved of command of PHIBFORSOPAC by Rear Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson. Wilkinson had been in SOPAC for some months, first as Deputy to Vice Admiral Halsey and then for a month in PHIBFORSOPAC learning in detail the Amphibious Doctrine and operational procedures, and participating in the TOENAILS Operation. Rear Admiral Turner proceeded to Pearl Harbor, via Guadalcanal and Noumea, and reported to CINCPAC. After several days of debriefing CINCPAC sent him on to the West Coast on temporary duty orders to confer with Commander Rear Echelon, Amphibious Force. The Rear Echelon was soon to be the Training Command of the Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet.

Kelly Turner then spent a welcome three weeks of leave with his wife in

Carmel, California, during which, on 8 August 1943, he was ordered to duty as Commander Amphibious Forces, Central Pacific. On 25 August 1943, he was back in the Hawaiian Islands and reported in Pearl Harbor to Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, Commander Central Pacific Forces, for this duty and also as Commander Fifth Amphibious Force.

The changes in the organization of the Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, came about as a result of a COMINCH despatch, reading about as follows:

> Effective 15 August Amphibious Forces reorganized as follows (a) Organize Fifth Amphibious Force (FIFTHPHIBFOR) Rear Admiral Turner (b) Change Amphibious Force South Pacific to Third Amphibious Force (THIRDPHIB) Rear Admiral Wilkinson (c) Change Amphibious Force Pacific Fleet to Ninth Amphibious Force (NINTHPHIB) Rear Admiral Rockwell (d) Change Amphibious Force Southwest Pacific to Seventh Amphibious Force (SEVENTHPHIB) Rear Admiral Barbey (e) Change Rear Echelon of Amphibious Force Pacific Fleet to Amphibious Training Command Pacific Fleet (PHIBTRAINPAC) Rear Admiral Davis. Commander FIFTHPHIBFORCE is Type Commander for all Amphibious Forces Pacific Fleet.
>
> August 1943
> DTG: 111902

Like any naval officer who takes on a fighting war in the tropics at age 57 and takes it to heart, Kelly Turner was tired when he left the Solomons. He had gotten out of a sick bed on a hospital ship to sail on the TOENAILS Operation; he had been relieved of his command in TOENAILS before he had tidied up the operation and was ready to go; and Savo Island still stuck in his craw like a rotten egg.

The Hepburn Report on the Savo Island disaster was just reaching COMINCH in mid-July 1943. Rear Admiral Turner had not had the benefit of reading CINCPAC's endorsement on the Report when he left the South Pacific, since the endorsement was not signed until 28 June 1943, and no copies of the endorsement were made for interested lower echelons. So it would have been quite natural for Rear Admiral Turner to be concerned as to his future, although he had been buoyed up temporarily when Vice Admiral Spruance told him that he had requested his services in the Central Pacific from Vice Admiral Halsey and that Vice Admiral Halsey and Admiral Nimitz had concurred. Admiral Spruance told the writer:

> In October 1942, Bill Halsey who, after a bout with the medicos, was under orders to take over his old Task Force and I flew south from Pearl to Noumea. On the way down, we asked CINCPAC for permission to stop over

at Guadalcanal. CINCPAC turned us down, as being too hazardous. We didn't understand that message then.

As soon as we landed at Noumea, a whale boat came alongside our plane to take us off and the Boat Officer handed Bill a message. The message directed Bill to take over as COMSOPAC. Bill swore a bit, but he was delighted.

When I was in Noumea again later on, I had been told by Nimitz that I was soon to have command of the Central Pacific Force. I immediately wanted to get Kelly Turner from Bill Halsey to head up the amphibious forces in my command, so I told Bill, 'I want to steal Kelly from you.' I was much surprised when he answered back real quickly 'all right.' [1]

Although Kelly Turner wouldn't see his fitness reports covering his service in the South Pacific until the Pacific War was over, Vice Admiral Ghormley had written:

A brilliant officer with fine character. Is somewhat intolerant in dealing with others. Very thorough in planning.

Vice Admiral Halsey wrote:

Handling of the Amphibious Force from the start of the Guadalcanal campaign to date has been superb. Largely through his efforts, the landing of troops and supplies has been continuous and very successful despite enemy opposition. His coolness and courage under fire has been inspiring.

Things were a bit brighter than they seemed.

THE BIG CHANCE

When Fleet Admiral Nimitz was asked in 1961, how he happened to pick Kelly Turner for the big command of the Fifth Amphibious Force being formed up for the Central Pacific campaign, he replied:

He was the senior man and a natural for the job. Spruance wanted him, and Halsey was willing to let him go to take on the bigger job.[2]

When the same question was put to Admiral Spruance, he explained his choice in the following words:

I returned for the second time to the Staff of the Naval War College in April 1935. RKT came to the Naval War College for the course about June 1935, finished the course in 1936, and remained on the staff until I left. I got to know RKT very well during this period. Our ideas on professional

[1] Interview with Admiral Spruance, 5 Oct. 1961.

[2] Interview with Fleet Admiral Nimitz, USN, 19 Oct. 1961, and letters from Fleet Admiral Nimitz during 1960, 1961, 1962. Hereafter Nimitz.

> matters were thoroughly worked out together, and we usually thought alike. I was greatly impressed with RKT's brilliant mind, his great capacity for hard work and his fine military and personal character.[3]

At the same time that Rear Admiral Turner was requested to head the Fifth Amphibious Force, Vice Admiral Spruance presumably asked Admiral Nimitz for the services of Major General Holland M. Smith, USMC. According to a Spruance biographer:

> He knew both of these officers to be extremely able fighters. He recognized that each was a strong personality, stubborn in support of his own views, and foresaw that there would be conflicts of views between the two, but believed, correctly, that he could diplomatically reconcile any differences of opinion between them.[4]

And when Rear Admiral Turner passed through Pearl Harbor on the way back from the New Georgia landings, he submitted a written memorandum to CINCPAC in which he recommended that CINCPAC:

> Appoint a corps commander of troops in 'COMAMPHIBFORCENPAC' as soon as possible and base him initially in or near Pearl. Major General Holland M. Smith, USMC, recommended for this latter duty.[5]

When handing over a personal Turner file labeled "Smith versus Smith" to this writer, in 1960, Admiral Turner said:

> I recommended Holland Smith for his job. He was the best man I knew for it. He was a marvelous offensively minded and capable fighting man. It was no mistake, and I would do it all over again. I am very much his friend, despite what he wrote about the Navy.[6]

Additional support for the point of view that Rear Admiral Turner played a part in the detail of Major General Holland Smith to command the Amphibious Corps, Fifth Fleet, is found in an extract from a personal letter which General Holcomb, former Commandant of the Marine Corps, quoted to me. This extract was from a letter General Holcomb wrote to Lieutenant General A. A. Vandegrift, who in due time would relieve him:

> I am practically certain that Holland will get the big job with Kelly. I am sure Nimitz wants him to have it. I believe that King does, and I know the Secretary does. In fact it is all set up that way. Holland has been doing a swell job training those Aleutian soldiers, and it is pretty well recognized.[7]

[3] Interviews with Admiral R. A. Spruance, USN (Ret.), 5, 6, and 7 Oct. 1961 and letters from Admiral Spruance during 1960, 1961, 1962, and 1968. Hereafter Spruance.

[4] Emmet P. Forrestel, *Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, USN* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 69.

[5] Turner to CINCPAC, memorandum, 24 Jul. 1943.

[6] Turner.

[7] Quoted in letter from TH to GCD, 5 Mar. 1961; TH to AAV, letter, 18 Aug. 1943.

The inference from this letter is that all that was needed to ensure the detail was the proper recommendation from the prospective immediate senior and prospective co-worker, Spruance and Turner respectively. This had been supplied in writing by Rear Admiral Turner on 24 July 1943, and presumably was supplied by Vice Admiral Spruance shortly thereafter.

Rear Admiral Turner had been much taken by Major General Smith's concentration on "first things first." One evidence of this was Major General Smith's publication on 8 July 1942 to his command of the following letter written from Spain in 1810 by the Duke of Wellington to the Secretary of State for War in England:

> My Lord:
>
> If I attempted to answer the mass of futile correspondence that surrounds me, I should be debarred from all serious business of campaigning.
>
> I must remind your Lordship—for the last time—that so long as I retain an independent position, I shall see that no officer under my Command is debarred, by attending to the futile drivelling of mere quill driving in your Lordship's office—from attending to his first duty—which is, and always has been, so to train the private men under his command that they may, without question, beat any force opposed to them in the field.
>
> I am,
>
> Your obedient Servant
>
> Wellington

Kelly Turner put a copy of this letter in his personal file.

In any case, Major General Smith arrived in Pearl Harbor on 5 September 1943 and became Commanding General Fifth Amphibious Corps. Five years later he sized up his co-worker for the Central Pacific amphibious campaign as follows:

> . . . He commanded the Fifth Amphibious Force, while I commanded the expeditionary troops which went along with the Navy and our partnership, though stormy, spelled hell in big red letters to the Japanese. . . . Kelly Turner is aggressive, a mass of energy and a relentless task master. The punctilious exterior hides a terrific determination. He can be plain ornery. He wasn't called 'Terrible Turner' without reason.[8]

On 28 October 1943, Major General Smith wrote to the Commandant of the Marine Corps in regard to his not being designated as the Commander Expeditionary Troops for GALVANIC in an early draft of the Operational Order issued by CINCPAC. He informed his Commandant:

> Believe it or not, K.T. protested the set up which took me out of the picture.[9]

[8] Smith, *Coral and Brass*, p. 109.

[9] Quoted in letter from TH to GCD, 5 Mar. 1961.

THE NEW STAFF

The most important and immediate chore for Rear Admiral Turner after his return to Pearl Harbor in late August 1943, was assembling an adequate staff for the newly created Fifth Amphibious Force. He had trouble doing this. In the expanding Navy, first rate people with amphibious background and staff experience were as scarce as glassy seas in the Bay of Biscay.

He had decided not to request to take with him his Chief of Staff, Captain Anton B. Anderson. I asked him "why" and he said:

> Andy had not been promoted to Flag rank, while a dozen or more of his classmates had been, and he felt that he hadn't had a proper preparatory command to justify his selection by the Board. During CLEANSLATE and TOENAILS, he had stayed behind working on logistical problems much of the time and hadn't seen too much of the landing phase of our amphibious operations. I wanted a Chief of Staff who was thoroughly familiar with operations, and he wanted a command.[10]

[10] Turner.



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Fifth Amphibious Force Emblem

Rear Admiral Turner decided in August that he would like to have Captain Paul S. Theiss (1912) as his new Chief of Staff. Captain Theiss had fought through the WATCHTOWER Operation as a Commanding Officer of a transport or a division commander of transports. He was still in the Middle Solomons fighting as Commander Transport Division Two, when in July 1943 Rear Admiral Turner left the Third Fleet. Theiss had turned in a first-rate performance.

However, by early August, Captain Anton B. Anderson, formerly Chief of Staff to COMPHIBFOR Third Fleet had been given command of Transport Division Two, and Captain Theiss was acting as Chief of Staff to Rear Admiral Wilkinson. So when COMPHIBFOR, Pacific Fleet asked Commander Third Fleet for the services of Captain Theiss, he was informed that they were not available. Admiral Nimitz applied the leverage which sprung Captain Theiss from the South Pacific.

This detachment of Captain Theiss very rightfully irked Rear Admiral Wilkinson, who on 22 October 1943, in the final days of preparation for the amphibious landing at Blanche Harbor, in the Treasury Islands, wrote to Rear Admiral Turner:

> I am still without a C/S since you robbed me of Theiss. Anderson I had already let go to a Transport Division command, following your recommendation.[11]

This letter brought forth the following explanatory reply:

> When I left the south it was with the understanding that I would fall heir to Rockwell's [Commander Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet] staff, but that turned out not to be the case. Therefore, it seemed to me absolutely essential that I have one or two other people here who were familiar with amphibious operations, as all the rest of the staff are entirely green on it. When Admiral Halsey came back to my request for these officers, stating they could not be spared, I prepared an alternative request with the idea of getting some other people from down there, possibly from the transports, who could be of assistance. However entirely on his own initiative, Admiral Nimitz directed that Theiss, Horne and Neal be sent up here.
>
> This thing [Tarawa] would have been pretty close to impossible if I had had no experienced help. The machinery here is so ponderous, that we have to clear practically everything with several officers before we can go ahead. Even with the very able assistance provided by the officers from the South Pacific, I am not entirely happy about the staff work.[12]

[11] TSW to RKT, letter, 22 Oct. 1943.
[12] RKT to TSW, letter, 9 Nov. 1943.

Paul Theiss and Kelly Turner were old friends, shipmates, and mutual admirers. Returning from the Army-Navy football game, the Theiss's had stopped overnight with the Turners the weekend before Pearl Harbor.

Paul Theiss was the exception which proves the rule that Kelly Turner could not get along with officers who were slow on the uptake. Commodore Theiss was a glutton for work, and his batting average on details was 99.9 percent. He was cheerful and confident, and when the Boss Man was riding the roller coaster over stormy waves, Paul Theiss was making standard speed on a relatively smooth sea. He was a great balance wheel for the Staff and the Staff spoke well of his efforts.[13]

Captain Theiss also served another valuable purpose for the Amphibians of the Fifth Fleet, as Captain E. W. McKee observed:

> I was shipmates with Paul Theiss in the *California*. Paul stood near the bottom of the Class of 1912, and like anyone who graduates down towards the end of the class, is a bit wooden at best. He was slow but sure on complicated matters. When I heard that Paul was to be Kelly's Chief of Staff, I said 'Well, Kelly will write the Op Orders so Paul understands them, and when Paul does, everybody will.' [14]

Many, many who worked for COMFIFTHPHIBFOR during the hard driving amphibious campaigns of 1944 and 1945 had words of praise for Commodore Paul S. Theiss, and none had complaints.

> Kelly provided the 'umph' and the 'umpity umph' but Commodore Theiss could always provide a helping hand when I visited the flagship.[15]

> After one had had a session with Kelly, a session with Paul Theiss was always a stabilizer.[16]

Lieutenant Commander J. S. Lewis, Flag Lieutenant and general handyman on the Staff for the past twelve months, was the only officer who went along with Rear Admiral Turner to the Central Pacific, although several others joined him later after intervening duty.

Admiral Turner told me that he was particularly anxious to take with him to the Fifth Amphibious Staff Captain James H. Doyle, the Operations Officer, whose tall cadaverous frame encompassed a stout heart and a hair-trigger tongue and brain.[17]

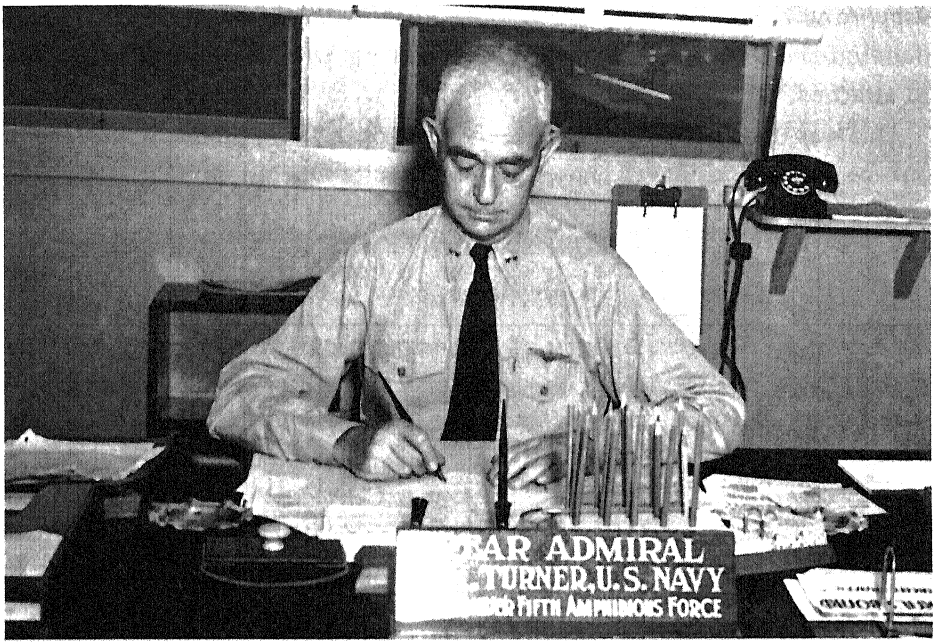
[13] Staff Interviews.

[14] Interview with Captain E. W. McKee (1908), 13 Mar. 1964. Hereafter McKee

[15] Bonney.

[16] Knowles.

[17] Joseph Driscoll, *Pacific Victory*, p. 57.



Turner Collection

Rear Admiral Turner in the Fall of 1943.

But Captain Doyle had to be left with Rear Admiral Wilkinson to provide the necessary staff member knowledgeable of past, present and future operations. Captain Doyle was detached by orders from Washington, less than three months after Rear Admiral Turner's departure and went to the Headquarters of the Commander in Chief United States Fleet for duty in the Amphibious Warfare Section, in order to make available the latest amphibious experience to the COMINCH Staff. When this happened, Rear Admiral Wilkinson wrote: "I miss Doyle sorely." [18]

Back in July 1942, when Rear Admiral Turner formed up his first seagoing staff, he had a total of 11 officers on the staff with ten more junior officers attached to the staff for coding, decoding and handling classified communications and for photographic interpretation and intelligence duties.

Being an apostle of Admiral King, his staff tended to remain really small for the tasks undertaken. But by 20 January 1943, the 11 had expanded to 14 and the ten attached officers to 18. By 30 June 1943 there were 16 on the staff and 21 attached for communications and intelligence chores. As has been pointed out, the larger staff included Army officers as well as Marines. The

[18] (a) TSW to RKT, letter, 22 Oct. 1943; (b) Doyle.

supporting echelon of the staff for the Fifth Amphibious Force was much more numerous, the roster for Tarawa showing 18 officers on the staff and 31 attached.[19]

This was the staff that, commencing in October 1943, planned and carried out the amphibious naval phases of the Gilberts Operation:

ROSTER OF OFFICERS 1 October 1943

Commander Fifth Amphibious Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Rank	*Name*	*N.A. Class*	*Duties*
Rear Admiral	Turner, Richmond K.	1908	Commander FIFTH Amphibious Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet
Captain	Theiss, Paul S.	1912	Chief of Staff & Aide
Colonel (USMC)	Knighton, Joseph W.		Asst Chief of Staff
Commander	Wells, Benjamin O.	1917	Intelligence Officer
Commander	Leith, Stanley	1923	Operations Officer
Commander	Taylor, John McN.	1926	Gunnery Officer
Commander	Horne, Charles F., Jr.	1926	Communication Officer
Lieutenant Colonel (Inf.)	Herron, George C.		Asst Operations Officer (Ground)
Lieutenant Commander	Lewis, John S.	1932	Asst Operations Officer
Major (USMC)	Neal, Willis A.		Transport Quartermaster
Lieutenant Commander	Ashworth, Frederick L.	1933	Aviation Officer
Major (Sig Corps)	Bowen, Francis C.		Asst Communication Officer
Major (USMC)	Shuler, Cecil W.		Asst Intelligence Officer
Lieutenant Commander	Stark, Harry B.	1936	Aide & Flag Secretary
Lieutenant Commander	Kircher, John J.	1936	Aide & Flag Lieutenant
Captain SC-V(G)	Bregar, Jacob M.		Force Supply Officer
Captain (MC)	Gillett, Robert M.		Force Medical Officer
Lieutenant Commander (CEC)	Lovell, Kenneth C.	1936	Force Civil Engineer

AMPHIBIOUS FORCE PACIFIC EXPANDS

When Rear Admiral Turner shifted from the South Pacific Force to the Central Pacific, one of the changes he requested shortly after arriving in

[19] (a) COMPHIBFORSOPAC Rosters, 18 Jul. 1942, 20 Jan. 1943, 30 Jun 1943. (b) FIFTH PHIBFOR Roster, 1 Oct. 1943.

Pearl Harbor on 25 August 1943 to take up his duties was that an Administrative Command for the Fifth Amphibious Force be established at Pearl.

Rear Admiral Turner had sought in his initial "Establishment Order" for the SOPAC Amphibious Forces to divorce himself from the administrative chores, and he had reiterated this desire in January 1943 when he again pointed out that not only his immediate subordinate administrative commanders but also other administrative echelons should communicate directly with COMSOPAC with respect to administrative matters.[20]

Experience in the South Pacific had indicated that these subordinate commanders were reluctant to pick up all the chores Rear Admiral Turner sought to divest himself of, so in early September 1943 he urged upon CINCPAC and the Navy Department the necessity of this new administrative command.

It was six weeks and many arguments later, before the Administrative Command, Fifth Amphibious Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, was created on 15 October 1943 "in order to permit the Commander Fifth Amphibious Force to devote his principal efforts toward the combat function." [21] This large shore-based command provided Rear Admiral Turner with a seasoned subordinate at Pearl Harbor to oversee the hundreds of thousands of administrative details arising from the expansion of the Fifth Amphibious Force to include hundreds of ships and tens of thousands of landing craft.

To head up this administrative command, Captain Wallace B. Phillips, U. S. Navy, Class of 1911, was ordered from command of the Transports, Amphibious Force, Atlantic, and shortly thereafter promoted to Commodore. Commodore Phillips had the benefit of command of the transport *Barnett* (AP-11) during late 1941 and the first half of 1942. During this period the *Barnett* had participated in the landing exercises of the 1st Division, U. S. Army in the Chesapeake and carried troops to places as far apart as Ireland and Tongatabu. Later he had been ordered as Commander Transport Division Seven and in the *USS Harris* (AP-8) had participated in the landings in North Africa as Commander of the Southern Attack Group Transports, and landed the United States 9th Infantry Division at Safi, French Morocco. After this operation, Captain Phillips became Commander Transport Division One, and, upon the detachment of Captain R. R. M. Emmett, U. S. Navy, on 4 February 1943, Commander Transports, Amphibious Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet.[22]

[20] COMPHIBFORSOPAC, letter, FE25/A3-1, Ser 037 of 20 Jan. 1943.

[21] (a) COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to CINCPAC, letter, Ser 46, 3 Sep. 1943; (b) Administrative History of Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet Vol. I, p. 64.

[22] COMTRANSPHIBLANT, War Diary, 1 Feb. 1943.

THE AMPHIBIAN PERSONNEL

Personnel problems in the Pacific Amphibious Force were at their peak in July 1943. By this date large numbers of new landing ships and landing craft were coming off the building ways and had to be manned. The rate of expansion in numbers of officers and men of the Navy was inadequate to provide the Bureau of Naval Personnel and the Forces Afloat enough time to train afloat sufficient officers and men in amphibious doctrine or just plain seagoing habits to adequately man these new landing ships and craft. There was a shortage of warm bodies and a great shortage of amphibians.

Rear Admiral Fort reported on the Third PHIBFORSOPAC situation at this time:

> Most craft arrived without adequate trained personnel. It was necessary to relieve many incompetent officers and to augment the crews with rated and experienced men off the transports. Several LCTs and LCIs had no officers or men who had ever been to sea prior to their trans-Pacific voyage.[23]

AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT ON THE GILBERT ISLANDS
THE PLANNING—WASHINGTON PHASE

At the ten-day Casablanca Conference convening on 14 January 1943, the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff arrived without their Chairman, Admiral Leahy, and with a totally inadequate planning staff of only the three senior Service planners of the Joint Planning Staff. An official history states:

> Unfortunately the Joint Chiefs had not arrived at Casablanca armed with a paper setting forth their views as to just what should be done in the war against Japan. As has been pointed out, they had not yet agreed among themselves what was to be done after completion of the Guadalcanal campaign. . . .[24]

The three Joint Staff planners, in a study paper circulated at the Casablanca Conference, listed "Seizure and Occupation of the Gilbert Islands" as an action which they visualized would occur during 1943.

However, in the final document of the Combined Chiefs of Staff approved at the Casablanca Conference, CCS 155/1, "Conduct of the War in 1943," dated 19 January 1943, the Gilbert Islands were not even mentioned among the operations to be conducted.

[23] COMLANCRASOPAC, letter, Ser 002 of 13 Jul. 1943, subj: Performance of Landing Craft

[24] Grace Hayes, *Pearl Harbor through Trident*, Vol. I of *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II* (1953), p. 391.

Upon the return of the United States planners from Casablanca, CCS 155/1, however, was treated as a statement of concept rather than a detailed working plan. In its place Admiral King's paper on "Pacific Strategy and the Conduct of the War in the Pacific in 1943," which had received the hurried blessing of the United States Joint Chiefs during the Casablanca Conference, and appeared as a memorandum attached to CCS 168, dated 22 January 1943, was considered as controlling the Joint planners during the early months of 1943. This JCS paper averred that the United States could forestall a Japanese offensive from the Gilbert-Ellice Islands towards Samoa by reversing the route with its own forces. Such an offensive would make the Hawaii-Samoa-Fiji-New Caledonia line of communications secure, which was a long-sought and much approved objective.

TRIDENT CONFERENCE

Before TOENAILS preparations in the South Pacific had really reached the hectic stage, the Trident Conference between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain and their senior military advisors took place in Washington, D.C. The conference lasted from 12 May to 25 May 1943.

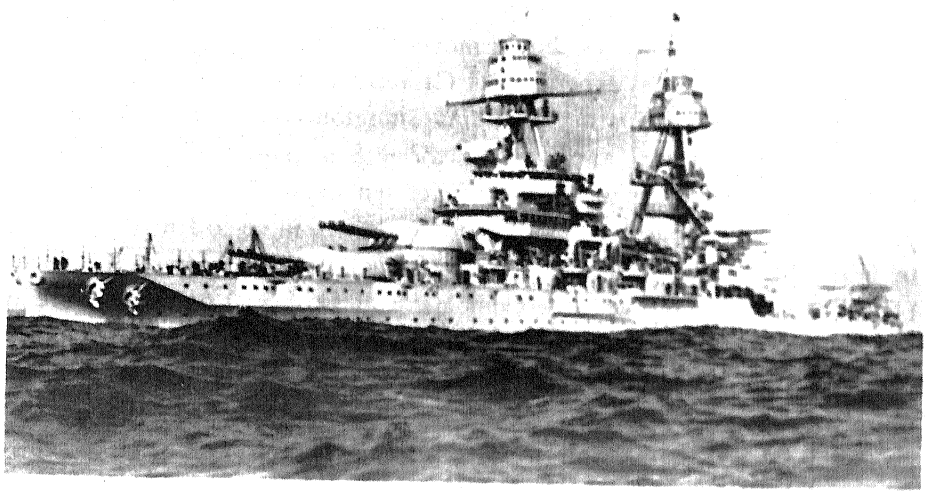
The United States Joint Chiefs paper No. 304 "Operations in the Pacific and Far East in 1943–1944" was an approved JCS paper by that time. It called for operations in the Marshalls and added the pleasant thought that, six months later, our forces should move on to the Caroline Islands.

Having learned from experience at Casablanca, a reasonable military staff was cleared for participation in the Washington conference and a sizable number of papers was approved by the JCS setting forth their military recommendations prior to Trident. After ten days of discussion and nine busy nights of preparing joinders and rejoinders in regard to the landing in France, the ousting of the Japanese from Burma, or keeping the Soviet Union or China in the war, the Combined Chiefs of Staff on 21 May finally got around to endorsing Admiral King's list of six Pacific Ocean operational projects contained in Combined Chiefs of Staff paper No. 239 (CCS 239). Number 4 project was "Seizure of the Marshalls and Caroline Islands." This approval marked the passing of the last real planning hurdle as to whether or not the drive across the Central Pacific would start in 1943, providing adequate resources could be assembled for the operation without hamstringing preparations for the invasion across the English Channel.

A FLAGSHIP

Rear Admiral Turner had come out of the South Pacific with the very definite belief that the commander of an amphibious task force should be provided with a flagship which did not have to carry troops and their logistical support to the assault landing and which had adequate working and sleeping accommodations for his staff. Additionally, the flagship had to provide adequate accommodations for the Amphibious Corps Commander, the Landing Force Commander and the Commander of the Support Aircraft and the numerous personnel of their staffs, as well as provide multiple communication facilities adequate for the escalating requirements of three or four commanders aboard the same ship during the early hours of an assault landing.

Since there was no ship currently afloat in the United States Navy to meet such requirements, a transport hull with a wholly new topside design was necessary. This ship was to be called a headquarters ship, although its official title was "Amphibious Force Flagship." But it was reasonably obvious that no ship with the desired characteristics would be available for the coming offensive in the Gilbert Islands.



80-G-1021408

USS Pennsylvania (*BB–38*), *flagship for Commander Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet in the Gilberts Operation.*

Admiral Nimitz did the best he could with what he had to meet the problem. He assigned a ship which had the best communication equipment of any ship in the whole Navy, a ship which had enlarged officers accommodations, and one which would not be directly concerned with carrying troops and their impedimenta.

On 15 June 1943, the old battleship *Pennsylvania* (BB-38), which had been the CINCUS and then CINCPAC flagship throughout the 1930's, was assigned as flagship for Commander Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet. The *Zeilin* (AP-9) was designated as relief flagship. The *Chilton* (APA-38) had been considered as a stop-gap flagship until the first headquarters ship (*Appalachian* AGC-1) was delivered, an event scheduled for September 1943. The delays inherent in building and then testing a new type ship made it apparent that the amphibious staff would have to make more than a pier head leap to be aboard a headquarters ship for the Gilbert Islands campaign.[25]

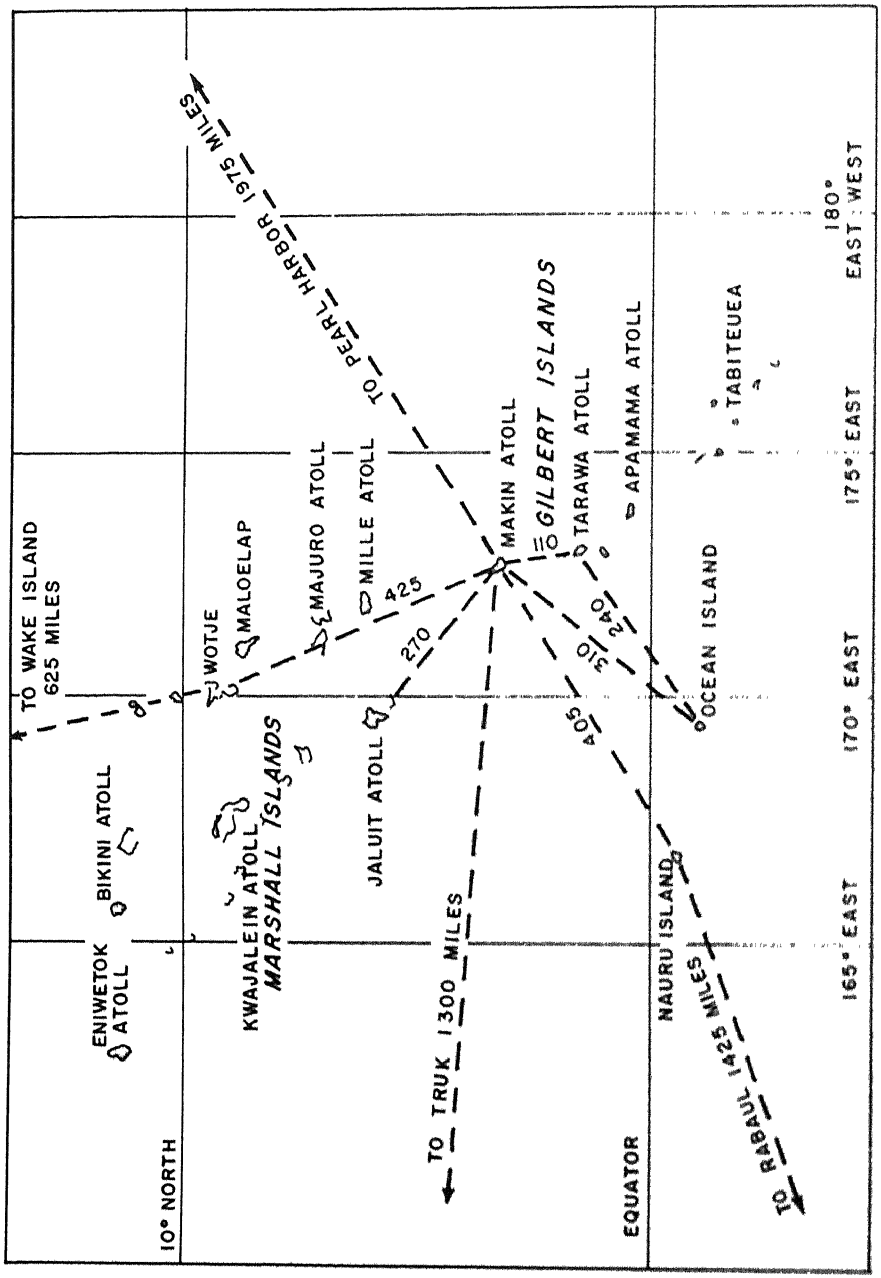
As a matter of fact, the *Chilton* did not get commissioned until 7 December 1943, and the *Appalachian* did not arrive on the Pacific coast until 26 November 1943. D-Day for GALVANIC was 20 November 1943.

The battleship flagship assigned to Rear Admiral Harry Hill's Amphibious Group being formed in the Central Pacific was the *Maryland* (BB-46), which had previously served as a division flagship in the Fleet. The communication central which had to be added to the *Maryland* in order that she might function as an amphibious command ship was built on a wing of the Flag Bridge, the only place available where the tremendous amount of electrical and electronic work could be completed in time for the operation. Unfortunately, the Flag Bridge was at about the same level as the muzzles of the 16-inch guns when they were firing at moderate ranges, introducing the hazard that all communications might be interrupted by their blast. This hazard jumped up to bite the Amphibious Group Commander during the gun support part of the landing.

THE EARLY PLANNING STAGE—PEARL HARBOR PHASE

Just back from the Casablanca Conference, and with the Japanese high-tailing it out of Guadalcanal, COMINCH on 9 February 1943, queried

[25] (a) COMINCH to CINCPAC, 091256 Jun.* 1943; (b) CINCPAC to COMINCH, 112105 Jun. 1943; (c) CTF 51 to CINCPAC, 122151 Jun. 1943; (d) *Pennsylvania* to COMPHIBFORPAC, 160616 Jun. 1943.



Marshall and Gilbert Islands.

CINCPAC whether an operation to secure the Gilbert Islands could be undertaken. CINCPAC politely demurred, pointing out that an intense Japanese air reaction could be anticipated during a period when our air resources to meet it were inadequate.[26]

But Admiral King never let up pressing the subject of starting towards the Marshall Islands, either at his bi-monthly conferences with Admiral Nimitz or in the Joint Chiefs of Staff meetings. Various routes were advocated by his planning subordinates. Reportedly Captain Forrest Sherman, a long-time strategical planner, and, at the time Chief of Staff to Commander Air Forces, Pacific, wanted to get to the Marshalls via the island of Wake rather than via the Gilberts. Others, including Rear Admiral Turner, favored a southern approach to Truk, main Japanese base in the Caroline Islands, up through Rabaul, New Britain, rather than via the Marshalls.

By mid-June 1943, the Joint Chiefs had been persuaded by Admiral King that the necessary Joint resources could be found after adequately supporting the 1943 Mediterranean campaign as well as the bombing of Germany, to start moving amphibious forces through the Central Pacific towards the mainland of Asia. This must be done, he urged, in order to cut off and deny Japan the tremendous natural resources she was extracting from Southeast Asia and the Dutch East Indies.[27]

TIMING AND FORCES AVAILABLE

Irrespective of what was being assumed in the South and Southwest Pacific, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were assuming on 15 June that the first phase of CARTWHEEL—the taking of the Middle Solomons and parts of New Guinea—would be completed by General MacArthur not later than 1 August 1943, and that a major part of the naval forces and the Second Marine Division from the South Pacific Area, would be employed against the Marshalls "about 15 November 1943." [28]

Back on this day, 15 June 1943, the Joint Chiefs directed CINCPAC to submit an outline plan for the seizure of the Marshall Islands, including an estimate of the situation, a general concept of the operation and the terribly difficult specifics: when the operation would be carried out, which of the

[26] COMINCH to CINCPAC 092200 Feb. 1943; CINCPAC, 112237 Feb. 1943.

[27] King to Marshall, COMINCH Memo, Ser 001150 of 11 Jun. 1943, subj: Future Campaign Operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas.

[28] JCS to CINCSWPA in War Department, 151655 Jun. 1943.

many Marshall atolls would be assaulted, and with exactly which amphibious troops, ships and craft.[29] It should be noted that the Gilbert Islands were not being mentioned at that high level. And it may be observed that just as Guadalcanal got into the WATCHTOWER operations via the backdoor of an approved operation for the Santa Cruz Islands, Tarawa reached its fame via the backdoor of a JCS approved operation for the Marshall Islands.

By 18 June, the Joint War Planning Committee, correctly anticipating a healthy reaction from General MacArthur about using elsewhere any of the forces currently in his area or directly supporting CARTWHEEL operations, came up with a plan for seizing the Marshalls *after* the Gilberts had been taken, and doing this without disturbing the forces in the Southwest Pacific Area. While saying that the "Gilberts operation is definitely inferior to the Marshalls operation," they reasoned that it was definitely better than doing nothing in the Central Pacific area.[30]

By 20 June CINCPAC had examined the when, where and with what sufficiently to inform COMINCH that training would have to overcome the problems involved in landing over coral reefs and asked for major increases in landing craft for use in training, including a hundred rubber landing craft with outboard motors.[31]

COMINCH on 24 June had directed CINCPAC that, in organizing the amphibious forces for the next operation, the organization should permit three simultaneous attacks on separated objectives. Since there were more than that number of Japanese air bases in the Marshall Islands, this seemed to be a logical directive if the operation was to be against the Marshalls. By the next day, the Joint Staff Planners in Washington were calling the prospective operation "A Marshalls and/or Gilbert Islands Operation," and thought was being given to assaulting simultaneously Tarawa in the Gilberts and Jaluit and Mille in the southern Marshalls.[32]

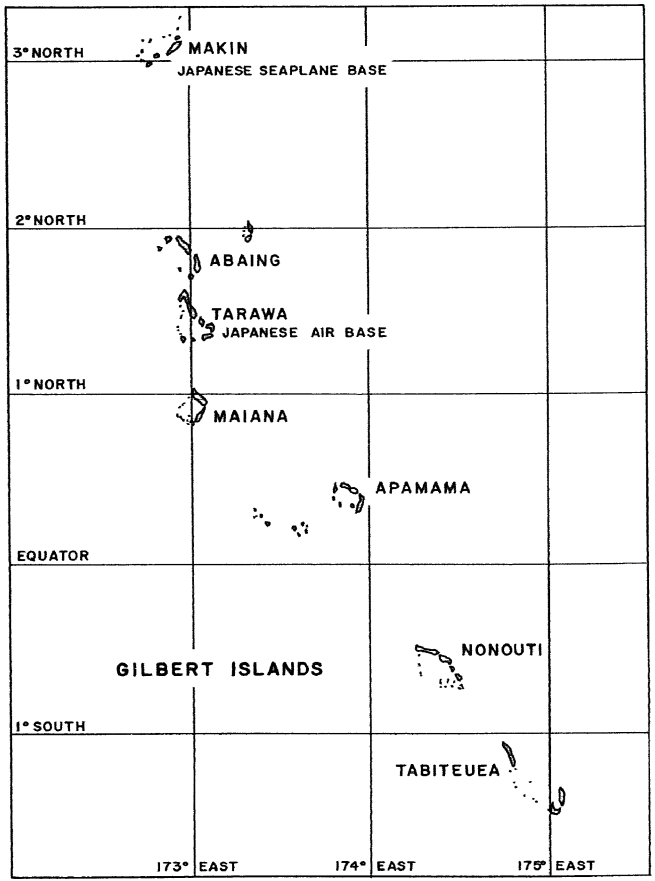
By 29 June the CINCPAC Planners had about decided that the Marshalls would have to be seized via the "Ellice and Gilbert Islands," with the two southern atolls of the Marshalls being our initial objectives in that group

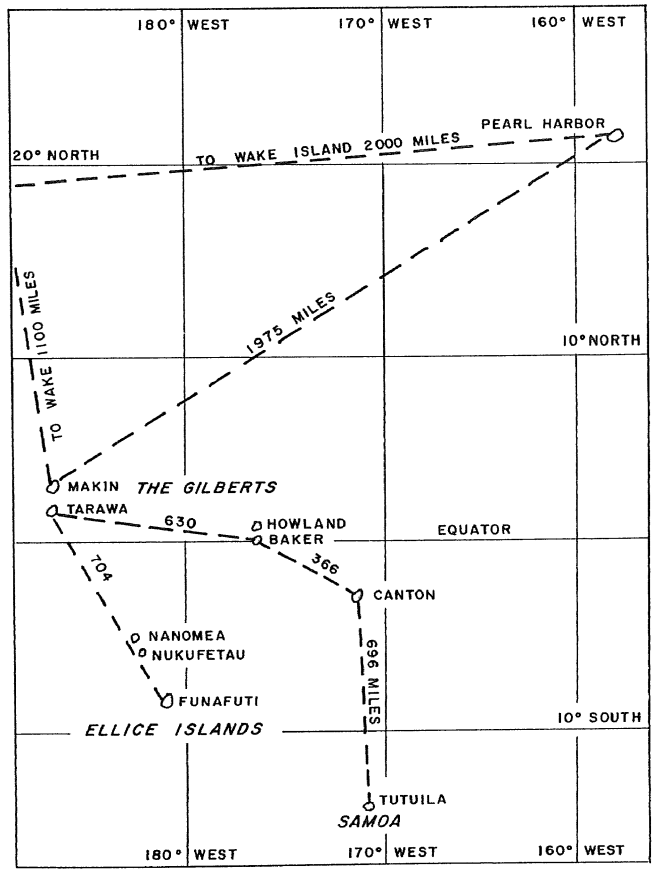
[29] COMINCH to CINCPAC, 152220 Jun. 1943.

[30] (a) MacArthur to Marshall, C3302-CM-IN13149, 20 Jun. 1943; (b) JPS 205/2, Operations Against the Marshall Islands, 18 Jun. 1943.

[31] CINCPAC to COMINCH, 200145 Jun. 1943.

[32] (a) COMINCH to CINCPAC, 241301 Jun. 1943; (b) COMSOPAC 250515 Jun. 1943; (c) CINCPAC to COMINCH, letter, Ser 0096 of 1 Jul. 1943, subj: The Seizure of the Marshall Islands.





Left: Gilbert Islands. Right: Central Pacific distance chart.

of islands.[33] Following a visit to Washington by Captains James M. Steele and Forrest E. Sherman from the Pacific Fleet on 4 July 1943, there was full discussion of four possible operations:

1. Initial seizure of Wake Island, then Kwajalein.
2. Initial seizure of Kwajalein, Wotje and Maloelap.
3. Initial seizure of Tarawa, Jaluit and Mille.
4. Initial seizure of Nauru, Tarawa and Makin.

The last was recommended to the Joint Chiefs who accepted it as having definite advantages.

Without being able to say exactly why the planners backed into the Gilbert Island decision, it should be pointed out that any plan for assault and occupation of the Marshalls direct from Pearl Harbor required more amphibious troops and transports than going to the Gilberts, because there were three strongly defended atolls in the Marshalls and only one strongly defended and one weakly defended atoll in the Gilberts. More carriers for close air support would naturally be required for the attack on three atolls than on two. The advantage of moving to the Marshalls under a shore-based air umbrella from the Gilberts would not be available in the first instance. Nor would the limited shore-based air reconnaissance and air bombing from the Ellice Islands be able to reach the Western Marshalls, but would be available in the Gilberts.

Since General MacArthur had protested vigorously against using in the Central Pacific Ocean Area the amphibious troops currently in his area, and since jeep carriers and their support aircraft were just coming on the line in small numbers, it is apparent that the planners at all levels had to trim their sails. Only an operation within the capabilities of the forces available could be projected. Hence the Gilberts won the contest for Rear Admiral Turner's attention.[34]

THE JCS DIRECTIVE STAGE

On 20 July 1943, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued their directive for

[33] (a) CINCPAC to COMSOPAC, 292145 Jun 1943; (b) CINCPAC to COMINCH 030021 Jul. 1943.

[34] (a) JCS 386, Strategy in the Pacific, 28 Jun. 1943; (b) Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1950), p. 183; (c) JCS 386/1 and Draft Directive; (d) Brief of Plan for the Control of the Marshall Islands dated 12 February 1943, called for assaulting Kwajalein, Wotje, and Maloelap; (e) JCS 92nd Meeting, minutes, 15 Jun. 1943, 8th item.

amphibious operations in the (a) Ellice Island group (b) the Gilbert Island group and (c) against Nauru. This operation was given the code name GALVANIC.[35]

There were two main differences and two main similarities between this directive and the one issued for the initial amphibious operation in the Solomon Islands. The two main differences were:

1. There were four months between issuance of the JCS GALVANIC directive and the target date, instead of one month.
2. The GALVANIC directive was in proper War College form with paragraph designated tasks, purposes, concept of the operation, forces available and command arrangements, instead of just a straight-forward statement.

The two similarities were:

1. The GALVANIC directive first mentioned a place where no fighting took place—the Ellice Islands—just as the Solomons directive had first mentioned the Santa Cruz Islands, where no fighting took place.
2. The GALVANIC directive contained a red herring—Nauru—which caused great differences of opinion at lower levels and much hard argument, just as Ndeni had caused great differences of opinion and much hard argument during the early months of the Solomon Island operation.

NAURU—THE PLACE WE DIDN'T GO

Since General "Howling Mad" Smith, the capable corps commander of the Marines in the Fifth Fleet, wrote "Tarawa was a mistake," tens of thousands of words have been written in regard to whether Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands should have been the first objective in the amphibious drive across the Central Pacific. Comparatively little has been written about dropping Nauru from the Joint Chiefs of Staff directive, and replacing that island objective with Makin Atoll.

Admiral Spruance wrote as follows when asked these questions. (a) During the planning for the Gilbert Island operation, who generated the change from Nauru to Makin? (b) Do you recollect your initial reaction to this proposed change?

[35] JCS to CINCPAC, Info CINCSOWESPAC, COMSOPAC, 202149 and 202204 Jul. 1943.

Neither RKT, Holland Smith, nor I liked Nauru as an objective. I opposed it because its physical characteristics made it a very tough objective to capture and not of much value after we had it, and particularly because our orders from the JCS called for a simultaneous capture of Tarawa and Nauru. They were about 380 miles apart. This would have meant a wide separation of our forces, with the Japanese Fleet at Truk, as strong as our total Fleet forces, able to strike with two amphibious operations going on. At this time we were dependent on submarines for information of enemy movements from Truk eastward through the Marshalls, as we had no air coverage. No one at Pearl seemed interested in my objections to Nauru.

Finally, during a CINCPAC-COMINCH bimonthly conference at Pearl, Holland Smith drew up a letter setting forth his objections to Nauru as an amphibious objective, and recommending that we not take it. RKT endorsed his approval, as did I. Then I went to the CINCPAC morning conference and handed the letter to Nimitz. Nimitz read it and passed it to King. King read it and then, turning to me, asked, 'What do you propose to take instead of Nauru?' I replied, 'Makin,' and said that Makin was 100 miles closer than Tarawa to the Marshalls, which were our next objective, that Nauru would be of little value to the Japanese after we took the Gilberts, that we could keep it pounded down, and furthermore that we did not need Nauru ourselves. Needless to say, the taking of Makin had been thoroughly considered by Holland Smith, RKT, and myself and our staffs prior to this meeting of CINCPAC-COMINCH. Admiral King gave me the fish eye but agreed to recommend the change of objectives to the J.C.S.[36]

Major General Holland Smith's recommendation to make the change in objectives was committed to paper on 24 September 1943. CINCPAC noted in his Command Summary on that date:

Study is going ahead to substitute Makin for Nauru in the GALVANIC Operation.

On the next day Admiral King arrived in Pearl for a regularly scheduled conference. On this same day CINCPAC made an official recommendation to COMINCH for the substitution of Makin for Nauru. The official reasons CINCPAC gave to COMINCH for supporting the change were:

a. More troops required for Nauru than for Makin (one division versus one regiment).
b. No transports available in the Pacific Fleet to carry these additional troops.
c. Because of shallow border reef, goodly cliffs, and rough terrain due to phosphate evacuations, success was doubtful at Nauru.

COMINCH joined CINCPAC in a despatch to the Joint Chiefs of Staff

[36] (a) Spruance; (b) COMFIFTHPHIBSFOR, letter, 05A/A16-3/Ser 0037 of 24 Sep. 1943 and COMCENPACFOR Endorsement thereon of 24 Sep. 1943.

urging Makin as the secondary target for GALVANIC. The JCS approved the change on 27 September, "although General Arnold raised some question as to the advisability of substituting an island with only potential air base facilities for one already containing an air base." Less than six weeks were left before sailing date for the Makin forces, when the official approval was relayed to the forces involved.[37]

Admiral Turner discussed Nauru with this author only in connection with answering the single question as to why he was at Makin instead of at Tarawa on D-Day of the GALVANIC Operation. His answer was:

> Nauru looked to be far tougher than Tarawa. It was also a lot closer to Truk and the Japanese Fleet than Tarawa. So it was logical for me to be at Nauru and Hill to be at Tarawa.[38]

Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill (1911), who was to step into Admiral Turner's big shoes at Okinawa, had become Commander Amphibious Group Two, Fifth Amphibious Force in September 1943, after serving almost a year as Commander Battleship Division Four in the South Pacific.

When Admiral Hill was asked this same question as to why Rear Admiral Turner left him with the Tarawa command, he replied:

> I don't really know, but I was darned glad that Kelly picked up Makin and left me with Tarawa. Tarawa was far the bigger and better job.[39]

It should be pointed out here that as a Captain, Harry W. Hill had served as War Plans Officer on the staff of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet, and later as an assistant to Rear Admiral Turner in War Plans, Naval Operations. The two, Turner and Hill, were on intimate terms and had great confidence in each other.

Rear Admiral Turner had a triple planning chore in GALVANIC. In breadth and descending order of importance, they were: (1) As the Commander Assault Force (CTF 54) he had the need for planning in close liaison with Commander Fifth Fleet (Spruance) and Commander Fifth Amphibious Corps (Holland Smith). (2) In the same capacity as CTF 54, he had the duty of coordinating the planning of the two major units of the Assault Force, the Attack Force at Makin and its Attack Force at Tarawa. (3) As the Commander of one of these two Attack Forces, he had the duty

[37] (a) CINCPAC to COMINCH 260439 Sep. 1943; (b) COMINCH to CINCPAC, 271805 Sep. 1943; (c) CINCPAC to COMCENPAC, 290139 Sep 1943; (d) Air Force, *Guadalcanal to Saipan,* p. 292.

[38] Turner.

[39] Interview with Admiral Harry W. Hill, USN (Ret.), 9 Jun. 1965. Hereafter Hill.

of planning the assault landing in close physical proximity with the Marine or Army Commander Landing Troops.

The reinforced Marine Division for Tarawa was physically in faraway New Zealand. The reinforced Army Regiment for Makin was physically on the island of Oahu in Hawaii.

At this late date (1966), it might be guessed that Rear Admiral Turner chose the only solution which permitted him to best carry out simultaneously the three chores. He placed himself at Pearl Harbor.

So located, he had close liaison with Vice Admiral Spruance and Major General Smith, the primary essential. He was situated where the best communication facilities were available for coordination of the planning of the two major units of his Assault Force command, which was the second most important requirement. Having fulfilled these two requirements, the fulfillment of the third meant that he would be the Attack Force Commander at Makin, and at Pearl he would have close liaison with the Army Landing Force Commander, Major General Smith, AUS. He would comply with the basic provision of FTP 167 that, in amphibious assault planning, the Naval Attack Force Commander and the Marine or Army Commander of the assault troops must be physically close at hand during the planning stage for an assault landing.[40]

The following extract from the letter Commander Fifth Amphibious Force wrote on the way back to Pearl from the Gilberts is also revealing:

> In view of the wide physical dispersion of the forces, particularly the ground elements, and the fact that it was necessary for many of the newly appointed commanders to collect and train new staffs, it seemed particularly necessary to assemble the principal commanders in Pearl Harbor for personal conferences, indoctrination, and the discussion and oral approval of plans. This was finally partially accomplished, and useful results followed, although the time for the work was limited. These personal conferences, in fact, provided the basis for drafting the principal directives. . . .[41]

AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING SHIFTS WESTWARD

Most of the amphibious training for the Pacific Ocean operations during the first 18 months of World War II had been conducted on the Pacific

[40] Rear Admiral Hill and staff flew out of Pearl for Wellington on 19 October and were not again in Pearl until after GALVANIC.

[41] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to CINCPAC, letter, C5A/A16–3(3) Ser 00165 of 4 Dec. 1943.

Coast of the United States. In mid-June 1943, COMINCH suggested to CINCPAC that a fair share of the training should be conducted in the Hawaiian Area.[42]

This was done. Units of the Army 27th Infantry Division were trained by Transport Division 20 at Kauai, Molokai, and Kahoolawe in the Hawaiian Area during October 1943. Five amphibious bases were built in the Hawaiian Islands at Waianae, Waimanalo and Waipio on Oahu as well as bases on the islands of Maui and Kauai.

At the same time that the planning for GALVANIC was going forward, a vast expansion of berthing facilities was undertaken in the Pearl Harbor Area to accommodate the large number of amphibious ships and craft, larger than had been needed for any previous Pacific Ocean amphibious operation.

However, the Marines' Second Division was in New Zealand, so Commander Transport Group, Wellington (Captain H. B. Knowles) was ordered to conduct its advanced amphibious training with Transport Divisions, Four, Six and Eighteen during October 1943. Special training with the amphibious tractors (LVTs) was conducted at far away Fiji during this same period in order that the tractors would experience beach conditions more nearly approaching those of Tarawa.[43]

Some of the problems encountered during this training period are related by Commander Transport Group Wellington.

> We came back from Kiska and got orders to be in New Zealand on the 1st of October. On our way down to Wellington, a radio came in saying I was to be in charge of training at Wellington. Training was set up with the Second Division. We didn't know where we were going to land, but we did train on coral beaches in Hawke Bay North Island, New Zealand.
>
> As transports arrived from the states, we found that quite a number, maybe a dozen, were newly converted transports, which had just completed their shakedown cruise. We borrowed everything we could from the older ships to make up for deficiencies in communication equipment, personnel and boats in the newer transports. The transports which arrived [New Zealand] the latest were the ones that needed training the most.
>
> I was notified that I would be Commander Transports for one of the Attack Forces, and that my flagship would be the *Monrovia* (AP-64). She was the ex-*SS Del Argentina.* I got a repair ship to build me an Operation Office on the *Monrovia's* bridge, got flag hoists installed, and borrowed a

[42] COMINCH to CINCPAC 141557 Jun. 1943.

[43] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, letters, Ser 0052 of 30 Sep. 1943; 3 Oct. 1943; subj: Amphibious Training.

set of signal flags for the Flag Bridge. I finally scrounged a couple of TBS from the *Heywood* (APA-6) my old command and some TBX from the Marines, so I would have voice radio control over the Transport Group.

There had been a Boat Pool in Wellington. The landing boats in it were largely wrecks from long usage and no replacements. We cannibalized all of them in order to get enough to fill up the transports.[44]

IMPROVED VEHICLES
ALLIGATORS, BUFFALOES, DUKWS

Since Guadalcanal, landing craft types known as ALLIGATORS, BUFFALOES, and DUKWS had come off the building ways in ever increasing numbers. Each had a particular characteristic making it a preferred craft for certain phases of amphibious operations.

An ALLIGATOR was an amphibious tractor, a landing vehicle, tracked (LVT). A WATER BUFFALO was a 5-ton amphibious truck. A DUKW was a 2.5-ton amphibious truck. It was obvious that tractors could make steadier headway over and through shallow coral reef areas of highly irregular pattern and filled with nutheads than the ordinary propeller-driven landing craft.[45]

Commander Fifth Amphibious Corps was able to arrange for the Second Division to be given 50 new LVT(2)s to supplement the 75 operable LVT(1)s available from its regular allowance of LVT(1)s, and to have these picked up for the Second Division at Samoa by LSTs while the division was proceeding from "Down Under" to Tarawa. Commander Transport Group Wellington, commented on this:

One squadron of LSTs in Samoa were loading tanks and Marine crews to rendezvous at the landing beach. I had never seen the men or talked to them until we arrived at the beach.

The uncertainties in regard to these LVT(2)s were such that the Marines got out alternate orders based on their arrival or nonarrival at Tarawa.[46]

ELLICE ISLANDS

The Marines had occupied Funafuti at the southern end of the 200-mile

[44] Interview Rear Admiral Herbert K. Knowles, USN (Ret.), 3 Jun. 1962. Hereafter Knowles.

[45] Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Va., "Special Landing Equipment," No. 26 in series on Amphibious Operations (1946) p. 43.

[46] (a) Smith, *Coral and Brass*, pp. 120–21; (b) Knowles; (c) COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, Group Two, Op Order A101–43, 17 Oct. 1943, Appendix 1 to Annex D.

chain of atolls in the Ellice Islands on 2 October 1942, and had built an airstrip there. In January and February 1943, reconnaissance and occasional bombing missions were made from Funafuti over the Gilberts and Nauru, the latter a long 881 miles away. The Japanese carried out a tit-for-tat surprise retaliation bombing raid on Funafuti on 22 April 1943. In due time, the Joint Chiefs, spurred on by CINCPAC, authorized seizing two northern atolls in the Ellice group and building and defending satellite fields there. Despite difficulties in getting heavily laden planes off the Seabee-built compacted coral runways, reconnaissance and bombing raids were carried out during the pre-GALVANIC Operation period from the airfields on both Nanomea and Nukufetau in the northern part of the Ellice Islands. On both of these atolls, new airstrips had been carved through the dense covering of coconut palms and two bomber squadrons were based thereon.

The Seventh Air Force based in the Ellice Islands (and Canton) provided an "all out" effort in the pre-invasion period. It reported 141 of its B-24s had sortied against the Gilbert Islands in 13 strike missions during the period 13–19 November and dropped 50 tons of bombs on Betio Island in Tarawa Atoll and an unreported amount on Butaritari Island in Makin Atoll. No Japanese air interception of these Ellice Islands planes took place until 16 November.[47]

THE TIME

The Joint Chiefs had indicated a contingent target date of 15 November 1943 for the occupation of Japanese positions in the Gilberts.

Rear Admiral Turner picked up his planning chores on 24 August. Major General Holland Smith picked up his on 9 September, and Rear Admiral Hill, his on 24 September. On that late September day, there were less than eight weeks to complete the planning and to get to the objective two thousand miles away.

CONCURRENT PLANNING

The planning for GALVANIC was done on a concurrent basis which means that all levels of command were planning at the same time, with

[47] (a) United States Air Force Historical Studies Division, Historical Study No. 38, Operational History of the Seventh Air Force, 6 Nov. 1943, 31 Jul. 1944, pp. 3–12; (b) USSBS Report No. 70 in Pacific War Series, "Seventh and Eleventh Air Forces in War Against Japan," pp. 3–4; (c) Air Force, *Guadalcanal to Saipan*, ch. 9.

the lower levels galloping along trying to keep their planning abreast of the constant changes introduced at higher echelons and still make progress towards their own final plan. Difficult as this is for the lowest levels, it is an essential when planning time is moderately short. It is also highly desirable if the operation is to be successful, since the problems the lower commands uncover can be taken up at higher levels and adjustments made before the control plans of the higher echelon become frozen into orders.

THE PLACE—THE GILBERTS

Having decided to take the Gilbert Islands to make possible the opening of the door to the Philippines the immediate question was: Did we know, or could we learn enough about the Gilberts during the next couple of months to make their seizure an amphibious practicality?

The known basic facts were that the Gilbert Islands consisted of two atolls and six coral islands with a total land area of approximately 150 square miles, spread thinly between 3° north of the equator to 3° south of it and centered about 400 miles west of the International Date Line.

Each of the irregular shaped atolls surrounding its placid lagoon was made up of reefs, spits, and coral patches as well as long narrow islets, mainly on the eastern or weather side of the lagoons. These barren atolls were from 5 to 40 miles across. The islets rose to a height of from 4 to 12 feet above sea level.

> On the seaward side of these atolls a fringing reef platform of coral extends outward for a distance of about ¼ mile, at which point it drops off suddenly to very deep water.

The three Gilbert atolls which aroused the main interest of the planners were, from north to south

MAKIN—Bell shaped atoll-lagoon 16 miles by 8 miles at center. The largest and most important island was Butaritari—crutch-shaped, 13 miles long by about one-quarter mile in width.

TARAWA—Triangular shaped atoll, 83 miles south of Makin. Lagoon 22 miles by 12 miles at south. Largest and most important island—Betio —two and one-quarter miles long by one-half mile wide.

APAMAMA—Oval-shaped atoll, 67 miles south of Tarawa. Lagoon ten miles on eastern side.

Apamama was also known as Abemama and Afemama. Apamama was generally used in the operation plans and orders, charts and maps, intelligence summaries, and reports of GALVANIC. Apamama is used herein, despite the fact that present-day charts and atlases favor Abemama.

Grand Central Park in New York City, three blocks wide and 51 blocks long, contains roughly 840 acres. Betio Island in Tarawa Atoll with slightly less than 300 acres resembled a marlinespike much more than it did Grand Central Park. Butaritari Island in Makin Atoll, with about 2,000 acres, was shaped a bit like a pickax with the handle a smidgen less than 11 miles long.

The "Notes on the Gilbert Islands For the Use of U. S. Forces" told all who had time to read:

> The following brief notes have been prepared by a European who has resided for many years in the Gilbert Islands. . . . In certain instances, material has been taken from Dr. Kenneth P. Emory's 'South Sea Lore.'

Readers of the notes were informed that Makin was pronounced "Muggin" and Tarawa pronounced "Tarra-wah."

> The islands are low, flat and sandy. . . . Mere ribbons of coral about 200 yards wide, often cut up into small islets separated by sandy channels fordable at low water, and surrounding lagoons of surprising beauty. . . . Robert Louis Stevenson who lived for some time in the Gilberts has described them as possessing 'a superb ocean climate, days of blinding sun and bracing wind, nights of a heavenly brightness.'

All Hands were given the comforting thought that prostitution was unknown and:

> Many European traders in the early days were killed by the natives for interfering with their womenfolk.

Reports from Australians who had lived in the Gilberts were to the effect that "boating and landing conditions are good during November and December because the light easterly winds prevail" and that the rainy season begins "during November and lasts through mid-January." [48]

Equally important to the amphibians as these basic facts and their interpretation were in what manner and with what number of Japanese fighting men were the various atolls and islands being defended, how approachable were the beaches by landing craft, and what was known about the tides.

A year before in mid-August 1942, we had landed a 220-man Marine raiding force on Makin Atoll via rubber boats from a Fleet-type submarine. The success of this much publicized effort unfortunately alerted the Japanese

[48] COMCENPAC Op Plan 1–43, 25 Oct. 1943 Annex E, pp. II–3, II–5.

to the fact that the fringe atolls of their island empire needed greater defensive forces than the 43 Japanese who had held Butaritari Island on the south side of Makin Atoll on 17 August 1942. The raid also alerted the amphibians to the difficulties of landing on these atolls in normal surf via rubber boats. On long term balance, it seems probable that much more was lost by stimulating the Japanese to strengthen garrisons all through the islands than was gained from the nubbins of technical information brought back from the raid.

In order to increase our knowledge of the Gilbert Islands we sought to extract by submarine periscope and by photographic reconnaissance plane bits and pieces of information and intelligence and then to compile them in useful form.

When these were joined and all the data gathered from air and submarine reconnaissance placed on air intelligence maps, it revealed that Betio (or Bititu) Island in Tarawa Atoll was defended by no less than:

8 large coast defense guns (4–8," 4–5.5")
6 small coast defense guns
4 heavy anti-aircraft guns (5")
24 light to medium anti-aircraft guns (.50 to 2.3")
68 beach defense and anti boat guns [40]

The post-operation "Study of Japanese Defenses" by the Second Marine Division showed this pre-battle estimate to be exactly accurate for all the larger guns and possibly a 35 percent underestimate for all machine guns 13-millimeter (.50-inch) or under. Moreover, this study indicated that:

> Weapons were, for the most part, mounted in carefully and strongly constructed emplacements of coconut logs, reinforced concrete, and revetted sand.
>
> These basic weapons were complemented by a network of obstacles, which took the form of antitank ditches, beach barricades, log fences and concrete tetrahedrons on the fringing reef, double apron-high wire fence in the water near the beach, and double apron low wire on the sand beach itself.

Butaritari Island in the Makin Atoll was less heavily defended by far. We estimated defenses to include:

4 heavy anti-aircraft guns
10–13 medium anti-aircraft guns

[40] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR (CTF 54) Op Plan A2–43, 23 Oct. 1943, Annex B, Appendices A, B, I, K, N and O.

9 pill boxes
39–69 machine guns

In October 1943, Apamama Atoll was believed not to be occupied by the Japanese nor defended. This was just slightly in error.

Based on these data, Commander Fifth Amphibious Corps and his two Landing Force Commanders drafted a Scheme of Maneuver and passed it to the Attack Force Commanders and then to Commander Assault Force for determination of its naval practicality.

Available navigational information indicated that landings on the eastern or weather side of the islets were far more difficult than landings from the lagoon side and could generally only be accomplished at high water. Landings from the lagoon side were less dangerous than over the outer reef, but:

> the stage of the tide is of extreme importance in all landing operations.[50]

ON THE JAPANESE SIDE

The Japanese arrived in the Gilberts three days after Pearl Harbor. In due time they used the lagoon of Makin Atoll as a makeshift seaplane base to touch down and refuel when making reconnaissance seaplane flights originating from the Marshalls and intent on taking a "look-see" at the vast water land to the east of the Gilberts. On 17 August 1942, other than Makin Atoll, the Gilbert Islands were unoccupied by the Japanese.

Following our raid on Makin, the Japanese moved rapidly to increase their defensive forces in the Gilberts. By the time November 1943 had rolled around, the Gilbert Islands, together with Nauru and Ocean Islands, were a subordinate naval command of the Japanese Fourth Fleet, headquartered at Truk in the Caroline Islands. This island command, called a Base Force Command in Japanese naval parlance, had a rear admiral, Keiji Shibazaki, to head it up and was on the same command echelon as the Kwajalein Base Command in the Marshalls.

JAPANESE AT TARAWA ATOLL

The Yokosuka 6th Special Naval Landing Force 1,500 strong was the initial mainstay of the defensive forces in the Gilbert Islands, but in May

[50] ONI Monograph No. 600, "The Gilbert Islands," Oct. 1943.

1943, the Sasebo 7th Special Naval Landing Force was withdrawn from Rabaul and joined the 6th Yokosuka. From this it appears that at this stage of the war, just before TOENAILS, the Japanese were more worried about the Gilberts than they were about the Bismarck Archipelago and the Upper Solomons.

Together with subordinate construction units and pioneers, these two units formed the 3rd Special Base Force (or 3rd Minor Base Force) totaling nearly 5,000 men. On Butaritari Island in Makin Atoll, they developed a regular seaplane base. They then turned to and built up the defenses and facilities of Tarawa Atoll. A main runway 4,750 feet long and 350 feet wide was developed on Betio Island, Tarawa Atoll, together with a secondary strip and a taxi strip. The runways, taxi strip, service aprons and turnarounds were all surfaced with coral.

It is axiomatic that attack energizes defense. After Army Air Force and Navy planes raided Betio Island on 18–19 September 1943, urgent additional defensive measures were undertaken by the Japanese to protect their command and communication centers against future air raids. Nine out of 18 twin engine bombers on the Betio airfield were still flyable after the 19 September attack and they were evacuated to the Marshalls. Four reconnaissance aircraft at Makin continued their searches. But far from softening up the Japanese defenses, these air raids are believed to have made the taking of Betio Island a far tougher chore for the amphibians.[51]

JAPANESE AT MAKIN ATOLL

A good comparison of the importance of Makin Atoll versus Tarawa Atoll in Japanese eyes is to be found in the ranks of the atoll commanders. At Tarawa, he was a rear admiral, Rear Admiral Keiji Shibazaki; at Makin, a junior lieutenant, Lieutenant (junior grade) Seizo Ishikama. Lieutenant Ishikama had in his command four reconnaissance seaplanes.

As to defense installations, the Japanese had been able or willing to fortify Butaritari with only a bare minimum. A perimeter defense had been established around the seaplane base on the lagoon shore. Defenses on the

[51] (a) JICPOA Bulletin No. 42–43, "Enemy Positions Gilbert Islands"; (b) Philip A. Crowl and Edmund G. Love, *Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls,* Vol. VI of subseries *The War in the Pacific* in UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1955), pp. 67–68; (c) Japanese Bases in the Mandated Islands, MS, Office of Naval History, Naval Operations; (d) Study of Theater of Operations, Fifth Amphibious Corps, 20 Sep. 1943.

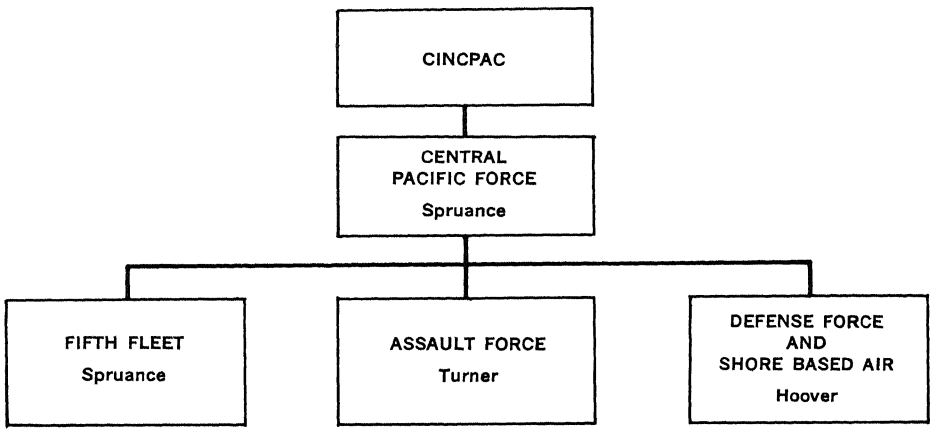
lagoon shore were comparatively light, consisting mainly of three dual-purpose 8-centimeter guns at the base of King's Wharf and a few machine guns.[52]

JAPANESE AT APAMAMA ATOLL

There were 23 Japanese troops on Apamama and no military defenses of any kind.

CINCPAC'S OP-PLAN GALVANIC

CINCPAC's Operation Plan 13–43 provided for the following main divisions of the forces assigned to accomplish GALVANIC:



Admiral Spruance informed this questioner that when the discussions were taking place about the air units to be assigned by Admiral Nimitz to the Central Pacific Force for GALVANIC, Vice Admiral John H. Towers, who was Commander Air Forces Pacific Fleet at the time, resisted having all carriers available so assigned. At a CINCPAC conference, he said:

> Spruance wants a sledgehammer to drive a tack.

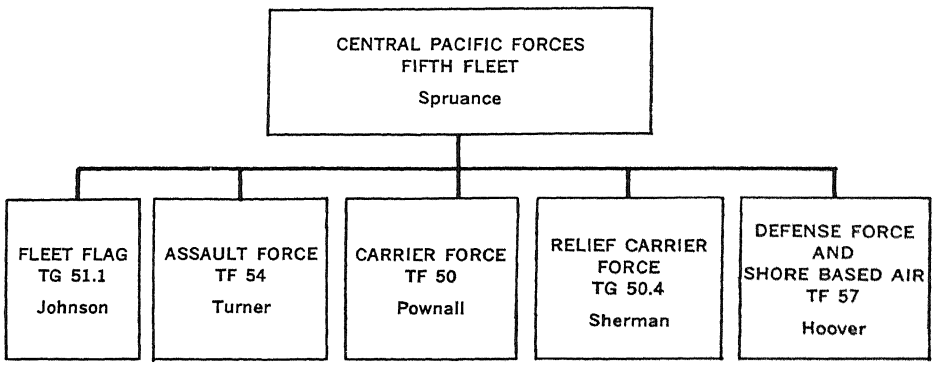
But Admiral Nimitz did assign his available carrier strength, as Admiral Spruance desired.

[52] (a) JICPOA Bulletin No. 8–44 "Japanese Forces in Gilbert Islands"; (b) Crowl and Love, *Gilbert and Marshalls* (Army), p. 71; (c) Eight centimeters are roughly 3.2 inches.

The Defense Force and Shore-Based Air Force was new in concept, developing out of the experience at Guadalcanal. Its missions included defending and developing the positions captured, including the construction and activation of airfields on the atolls of Makin, Tarawa, and Apamama. All this was to be done to give air support to the Central Pacific campaign.

VICE ADMIRAL SPRUANCE'S PLAN

Vice Admiral Spruance's Operation Plan CEN 1–43 called for the following subdivision of his forces:

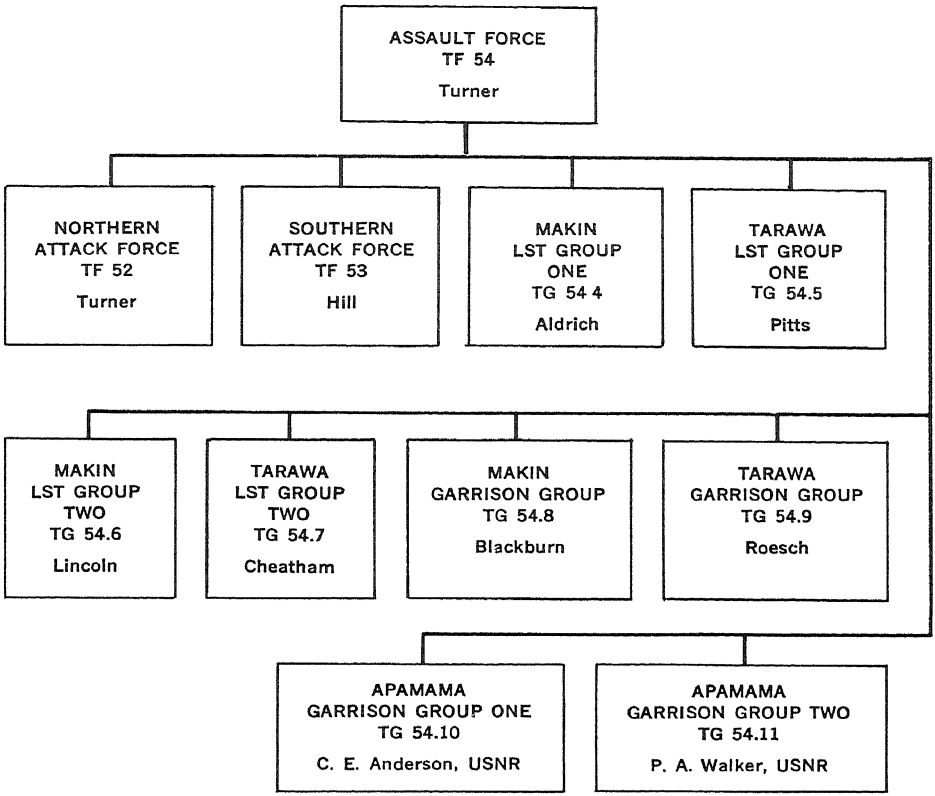


The plan further indicated the subdivision of the various subordinate Task Forces in considerable detail by breaking them down into specific mission task groups. The subdivisions indicated for the Assault Force were as shown on page 631.

Commander Central Pacific's GALVANIC Operation Plan was a massive 324 pages, but it represented a distinct advance over the plans issued for WATCHTOWER and TOENAILS, which Rear Admiral Turner, Commander Assault Force, previously had fought under.

Vice Admiral Spruance's plan provided the following advances in doctrine:

1. that a ship-based commander—Commander Central Pacific Force—with a determination to be in the objective area, retained immediate personal operational control over the operation.
2. for the coordination of the various Central Pacific task forces under one commander in the operating or objective area should a Japanese surface or carrier task force show up to threaten or attack the amphibious forces.



3. in advance, the conditions for the essential change of command from the Amphibious Task Force Commander to the Landing Force Commander at each assault objective.
4. in advance, the command responsibility for the development of the base facilities at the objective to be seized.
5. for support aircraft at each assault objective to be under the control of the Amphibious Task Force Commander. These aircraft had a capability for dawn or dusk search of the sea area approaches to the assault objective areas, should the need arise.
6. for the reconnaissance aircraft to be at the outer limits of their searches at sundown in lieu of arrival back at base at sundown.

In keeping his subordinate Flag officers informed as to his general intentions and desires under various contingencies, Vice Admiral Spruance further provided:

> The possibility of an enemy attack in force on the Makin Area with little or no warning necessitates that on and after D-Day, the carrier task groups

operating there with the new battleships in their screens must remain in as close tactical supporting distance of the Northern Attack Force as the nature of their air operations and their fuel situation permits.[53]

Vice Admiral Spruance's general concept called for:

1. Assault Forces to take Makin and Tarawa.
2. Occupation Forces at Apamama.
3. Air bombing and surface bombardment of Nauru particularly directed at enemy aircraft, air and harbor facilities.
4. Battleships, carriers, cruisers, destroyers to take dispositions between amphibious assault ships and enemy Fleet should it appear.
5. Rapid development of seized atolls into air bases for air reconnaissance and offensive use against the Marshall Islands.

A submarine was to be stationed at Nauru to report daily the weather there and to make special reports of bad or changing weather. Since weather moves from west to east, this would tip off the amphibians on what to expect as they approached the Gilberts.

The movement of the Assault Force into the Gilberts was to be assisted by shore based aircraft of Task Force 57, carrying out long range reconnaissance over the eastern Marshalls and attack missions in the eastern Marshalls and against Nauru, and to be immediately supported and covered by the Carrier Forces (Task Force 50) of the Fifth Fleet.

Vice Admiral Spruance's Operation Plan was issued two days after Rear Admiral Turner, as Commander Assault Force (CTF 54), had issued his Operation Plan A2–43. Since CEN 1–43 has been graphed and discussed, and since it prescribed the same details of TF 54 organization as Op Plan A2–43, there is no need to repeat the latter's details. As an indication of the weight of paper under which the amphibians labored, it is noted that Vice Admiral Spruance's Plan ran to 324 pages and Rear Admiral Turner's a more modest 140 pages, but to that was added 54 pages for those in the Northern Attack Force.

It is necessary, however, in order to follow Rear Admiral Turner, to detail the organization of the Northern Attack Force (TF 52), which he commanded directly in addition to commanding the over-all Assault Force. The Northern Attack Force was assigned the mission of seizing, occupying, and developing Makin Atoll and Little Makin Atoll.

As previously mentioned, Makin Atoll held the Japanese seaplane base,

[53] COMCENPACFOR to All Flag Officers, General Instructions for GALVANIC Operation, 29 Oct. 1943.

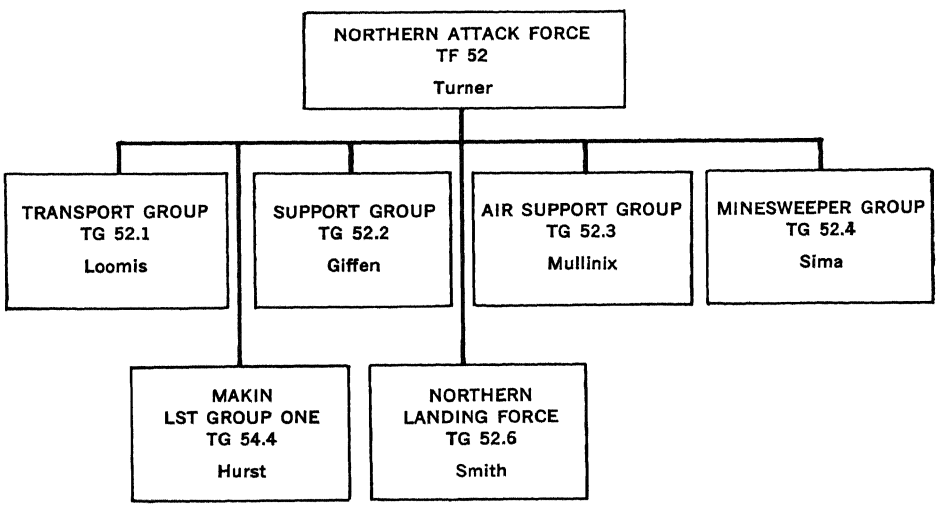
while Tarawa Atoll held the Japanese land plane base. These air facilities were needed by us as the key activities in our establishment of advanced naval bases in the Gilberts from which to support and to provide air cover for the already scheduled Pacific Fleet movement into the Marshall Islands.

APAMAMA

The siting and construction of a land plane base at Apamama Atoll was planned to follow close behind the crash rebuilding and expansion effort at Tarawa in order to be able to do air battle on more even terms with the four Japanese air bases in the Marshalls.

Apamama Atoll was chosen for part of the GALVANIC effort because, presumably, it had the largest expanse of smooth water of any lagoon in the Gilbert Island Group and "good holding ground" in its large anchorage. There was a need for a logistic support base west of Pearl to facilitate the western movement of the Pacific Fleet and, before the early and marked success in the Marshall Islands, thought also was given to developing Apamama for this purpose.

The organization and tasks of the Northern Attack Force were prescribed in Rear Admiral Turner's 54-page order as follows:



The detailed assignment of ships and troops of the Northern Attack Force was as follows:

NORTHERN ATTACK FORCE—TASK FORCE 52

(a) *TASK GROUP 52.1 TRANSPORT GROUP* Captain Donald W. Loomis (1918)

(1) *TASK UNIT 52.1.1 ASSAULT TRANSPORT DIVISION* (TRANSDIV 20) Captain Loomis

Leonard Wood	APA-12(F)	Captain Marlin O'Neil, USCG
Calvert	APA-32	Commander E. J. Sweeney, USNR
Pierce	APA-50	Commander A. R. Ponto (1919)
Alcyone	AKA-7	Commander J. B. McVey (1922)

(2) *TASK UNIT 52.1.2 RESERVE TRANSPORT DIVISION* Commander O. R. Swigart (1921)

Neville	APA-9(F)	Commander O. R. Swigart (1921)
Belle Grove	LSD-2	Lieutenant Commander M. Seavey, USNR

(3) *TASK UNIT 52.1.3 TRANSPORT SCREEN* Commander M. M. Riker (1927)

Mustin	DD-341(F)	Commander M. M. Riker (1927)
Kimberly	DD-521	Lieutenant Commander Harry Smith (1930)
Burns	DD-588	Lieutenant Commander D. T. Eller (1929)

(b) *TASK GROUP 52.2 SUPPORT GROUP* Rear Admiral R. C. Giffen (1907)

(1) *TASK UNIT 52.2.1 FIRE SUPPORT UNIT ONE* Rear Admiral R. C. Giffen (1907)

Pennsylvania	BB-38(F)	Captain W. A. Corn (1914)
Idaho	BB-42	Captain H. D. Clarke (1915)
Minneapolis	CA-36(F)	Captain R. W. Bates (1915)
San Francisco	CA-38	Captain A. F. France (1918)
Dewey	DD-349	Lieutenant Commander J. P. Canty (1929)
Hull	DD-350	Lieutenant Commander A. L. Young, Jr. (1931)

(2) *TASK UNIT 52.2.2 FIRE SUPPORT UNIT TWO* Rear Admiral R. M. Griffin (1911)

New Mexico	BB-40(F)	Captain E. M. Zacharias (1912)
Mississippi	BB-41	Captain L. L. Hunter (1912)
New Orleans	CA-32	Captain S. R. Shumaker (1915)
Baltimore	CA-68	Captain W. C. Calhoun (1917)
Gridley	DD-380	Lieutenant Commander J. H. Motes (1931)
Maury	DD-401	Lieutenant Commander J. W. Koenig (1933)

(3) *TASK UNIT 52.2.3 FIRE SUPPORT UNIT THREE* Captain R. E. Libby (1922)

MacDonough	DD-351	Lieutenant Commander J. W. Ramey (1932)
Phelps	DD-360(F)	Lieutenant Commander J. E. Edwards (1930)

(c) *TASK GROUP 52.3 AIR SUPPORT GROUP* Rear Admiral H. M. Mullinix (1916)

Liscome Bay	CVE-56(F)	Captain I. D. Wiltsie (1921)
Coral Sea	CVE-57	Captain H. W. Taylor, Jr. (1921)
Corregidor	CVE-58	Captain R. L. Bowman (1921)
Hughes	DD-410	Lt. Commander E. B. Rittenhouse (1934)
Morris	DD-417	Lt. Commander F. T. Williamson (1931)
Hoel	DD-533	Lt. Commander W. D. Thomas (1928)
Franks	DD-554	Lt. Commander N. A. Lidstone (1930)

(d) *TASK GROUP 52.4 MINESWEEPER GROUP* Commander F. F. Sima, USNR

Revenge	AM-110	Commander F. F. Sima, USNR

(e) *TASK GROUP 54.4 MAKIN LST GROUP ONE* Commander A. M. Hurst

LST-31	Lieutenant J. D. Schneidau, USNR
LST-78	Lieutenant C. J. Smits, USNR
LST-179	Lieutenant George D. Jagels, USNR
LCT-167	
LCT-82	Lieutenant (jg) Moore
LCT-165	
DD-353 *Dale*	Lieutenant Commander C. W. Aldrich (1932)

(f) *TASK GROUP 52.6 NORTHERN LANDING FORCE* Major General R. C. Smith, AUS

(1) *TASK UNIT 52.6.1 ASSAULT LANDING FORCE* Colonel Gardiner J. Conroy, USA

RCT 165 (less 2nd Battalion Landing Team) and attached unit of 105th Infantry Regiment

(2) *TASK UNIT 52.6.2 RESERVE LANDING FORCE* Lieutenant Colonel John F. McDonough, USA

2nd Battalion Landing Team of RCT 165 and attached unit of 105th Infantry Regiment

(3) *TASK UNIT 52.6.3 HEADQUARTERS GARRISON FORCE* Colonel Clesen H. Tenney, AUS

Embarked garrison and service units

(4) *TASK UNIT 52.6.4 HEADQUARTERS AIRCRAFT MAKIN* Colonel Thorp, USA
Support Aircraft (from carriers)
Fighter Cover (from carriers)

Commander Support Group was Commander Cruiser Division Six (Giffen); Commander Fire Support Unit Two was Commander Battleship Division Three (Griffin); and Commander Fire Support Unit Three was Commander Destroyer Squadron One (Libby). Commander Cruiser Division Four (Rear Admiral C. H. Wright) was in *Minneapolis.*

The error [54] of historian Samuel Eliot Morison in listing Rear Admiral Griffin as Commander Support Group in place of Rear Admiral Giffen possibly arose due to last minute arrival of Giffen in Pearl. In his absence Griffin commanded the Support Group at the rehearsal.

THE COMMAND PROBLEM—IN THE GROOVE

On 25 October, CINCPAC modified his Operation Plan so that command would pass from the Commander Attack Force to Commander Landing Force in accordance with the following procedure:

> At each atoll, as soon as the Landing Force Commander determines that the status of the landing operations permits, he will assume command on shore and report that fact to the Commander Attack Force.

This changed the previous directive under which the Commander Landing Force would announce he was ready to assume command ashore, and the Commander Attack Force would direct him to do so.

An additional change made by CINCPAC at the same time provided for an orderly change of responsibility for the defense and development of atolls or islands captured. This had been so sadly lacking in the operation orders for WATCHTOWER and TOENAILS.

> Commander Central Pacific Force will determine and announce when the capture and occupation phase is completed, whereupon Commander Defense Force and Shore Based Air will assume his responsibility for the defense and development of positions captured.

This superseded the provision:

> Commander Central Pacific Force will determine when the capture and occupation phase is completed and will then direct command of all forces

[54] Morison, *Aleutians, Gilberts and Marshalls* (Vol. VII), Appendix II.

> ashore at objectives pass from Commander Assault Force to Commander Defense Force and Shore Based Air.

Rear Admiral Turner supported both of these changes, and inaugurated the second one.[55]

THE TROOPS

It had been hoped by some naval planners that the Marine First Division, stationed in the Southwest Pacific in June 1943, would participate with the Marine Second Division in GALVANIC. Since this withdrawal of a Marine Division from General MacArthur's command was unacceptable to the Army, the Army's 27th Division, stationed in Hawaii, was designated to participate, in lieu of the Marine First Division.[56]

THE REHEARSALS

It was not possible for either Attack Force to hold a full dress rehearsal with all assault units present. As Rear Admiral Turner reported:

> Abbreviated final rehearsals of the assault echelons were held in Efate and Hawaii, though some of the combatant vessels and a large part of the carrier aircraft could not participate.[57]

Rehearsal sites for the Northern Attack Force (Makin) assembling in the Hawaiian Area were at Maalaea Bay, Maui and at Kahoolawe Island. The rehearsal was held in two distinct parts between 31 October and 4 November. At Maalaea Bay, the troops landed on November 1st and again on November 2nd but no supplies or equipment were sent ashore, and the guns did not shoot nor the bombers drop their bombs because the land area behind the beaches was privately owned and occupied. At Kahoolawe, on November 3rd, the guns shot, the bombs were dropped, and the troops disembarked but did not land because of rocky and quite unsuitable beaches for the landing craft.

[55] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, letter, OSA/A16–3/Ser 0023 of 19 Sept. 1943, with endorsements thereon by COMCENPACFOR and CINCPAC, subj: Recommended changes in command arrangements, CINCPAC Operation Plan 13–43.

[56] COMINCH to C/S USA, 14 Jun. 1943 and 22 Jul. 1943 and 29 July reply thereto, subj: Release of 1st or 3rd Marine Division for operations in Central Pacific.

[57] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, Report of GALVANIC Operation, Ser 00165 of 4 Dec. 1943, para. 12.

The rehearsal site for the Southern Attack Force (Tarawa) assembling in the South Pacific was on the good beaches at Meli Bay off Fila Harbor, Efate Island in the New Hebrides, where the large transports had rehearsed for TOENAILS. Again the gunfire support ships present were shunted off for bombardment practice to Pango Point at the southern end of Meli Bay or to nearby Erradaka Island, while the transports rehearsed troop landings on both 7 and 9 November. Neither the big carriers nor the jeep carriers nor their aircraft participated.

As Rear Admiral Turner wrote to Commander Southern Attack Force:

> It was too bad that you could not get TG 50.3 [2 CVs, 1 CVL, 3 CAs, 1 CLAA, 5 DDs] and all the cruisers and destroyers for your rehearsal, but it could not be helped. I hope that you got some benefits from your rehearsals, and are set to go. TF 52 [Northern Attack Force] was finally able to get just three days of rehearsals, with one day's firing. Even then, only a few of the carriers were present, and not all the gunfire vessels. . . . However, we've had some stiff drills on the way down, as well as during rehearsals, and they are not so green as they were.[58]

One thing happily learned from this rehearsal was that high capacity shells for both the 5-inch and the 16-inch naval gun would detonate upon impact with land at all ranges down to 2,500 yards.[59]

CONCERN, WORRIES, PROBLEMS

Missing from most of the writings of the last twenty years dealing with GALVANIC is any mention of the very real concern felt throughout the Central Pacific Force, during the immediate pre-landing period, that the Japanese Fleet at Truk would move out to challenge the first United States amphibious movement headed directly toward the Mandated Islands.[60]

It was known at high command levels in the Pacific Fleet through radio direction-finder intelligence that the main Japanese Fleet had moved out of Truk and into the Marshalls at the time of the fast carrier raids of 18–19 September and again, for an unknown cause, on 17 October. It was anticipated that the Japanese air reconnaissance would report the amphibians to Admiral Meneichi Koga when they were two to three days steaming distance away from the Gilberts.[61]

[58] RKT to Commander Southern Attack Force (TF 53), letter, 17 Nov. 1943.

[59] CTF 53, Report of Tarawa Operations, Ser 0036 of 13 Dec. 1943, p. 1 to Encl. (A).

[60] (a) Morison, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific* (Vol. III), Chs VII–XI; (b) Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls* (Army), chs. I–X.

[61] CINCPAC Command Summary, Book Four, 26 Oct. 1943, p. 1677.

On 26 October, CINCPAC noted in his Command Summary that:

> As a result of [our] anticipated raids or action against enemy Central Pacific islands, the main forces of the Japanese Fleet left TRUK about 16 October for area northeast of there. This may be interpreted to mean that the Japanese may be expected (a) to station their surface forces now at TRUK in positions to counter our moves into the GILBERTS or MARSHALLS, (b) to sortie from TRUK on suspicion of any air raid proceeding toward that base.

A few days later, Vice Admiral Spruance in his "General Instructions to Flag Officers, Central Pacific Force, for GALVANIC" wrote:

> If, however, a major portion of the Japanese Fleet were to attempt to interfere with GALVANIC, it is obvious that the defeat of the enemy fleet would at once become paramount. . . . The destruction of a considerable portion of the Japanese naval strength would . . . go far towards winning the war. . . . We must be prepared at all times during GALVANIC for a fleet engagement.[62]

As the final sailing date for GALVANIC forces in the Hawaiian Area approached, loud cries to CINCPAC for the assignment of additional combatant ships to the South Pacific Force arose from Vice Admiral Halsey, an officer not given to crying "wolf" unnecessarily. Amphibious landings by South Pacific Forces at Empress Augusta Bay in Bougainville Island, only a bit over two hundred miles south of hard-held Rabaul, had bestirred the Japanese Fleet at Truk. Cruisers and destroyers from that fleet steaming towards Rabaul from Truk were believed to about tip the balance of sea power to the Japanese side in the Middle and Upper Solomons.[63]

COMSOWESPAC, to meet the emergency, ordered two cruisers and four destroyers temporarily to SOPAC. CINCPAC, to meet the emergency, ordered GALVANIC Task Group 50.3, containing three carriers and their destroyer screen, diverted to SOPAC with a view to making air strikes on the Japanese. Additionally, he ordered a light cruiser division and a destroyer division, enroute from the Central Pacific to their rehearsal for GALVANIC in the New Hebrides, to dash ahead of the Main Body and join up with SOPAC Forces to bolster the available defensive forces. To indicate that the loans were very temporary ones, CINCPAC directed that the ships be started back to the Central Pacific about 12 November. To provide adequate time

[62] COMCENPACFOR, General Instructions, 29 Oct. 1943.

[63] COMSOPAC to CINCPAC 030100 Nov. 1943; CINCPAC to COMSOPAC 030915, 052111 Nov. 1943; CINCPAC to COMCENPAC 060320 Nov. 1943; COMINCH to CINCPAC 081626 Nov. 1943.

for the reassembly of the GALVANIC Forces, Dog Day for GALVANIC, which had been set for 19 November, was delayed to 20 November. COMINCH indicated his disapproval of further delay.

On 15 November, CINCPAC noted in his Command Summary, and presumably passed on to his senior commanders in the Fifth Fleet, that "Intelligence reports indicated extensive movement of aircraft in the Marshall-Gilbert Islands." This presaged a warm reception for the oncoming amphibians.

THE FINAL ASSAULT PLANS—TASK FORCE 54

The Scheme of Maneuver at Makin Atoll called for H-hour assault landings at the seaward (eastern) beaches of Butaritari Island and a delayed assault landing two hours later on the lagoon beaches of the same island a mile and a half to the northward. The 165th Infantry Regiment of the 27th Infantry Division would provide the main assault troops loaded in LCVPs. A detachment of troops from the 105th Infantry Regiment from the same division, loaded in LVTs, if these became available prior to the sailing of the Task Force from Pearl Harbor, would lead in the assault. At the same H-Hour, a Marine platoon was to capture Entrance Island guarding the lagoon of Makin Atoll.

The Scheme of Maneuver at Tarawa Atoll called for H-Hour assault landings on three lagoon (northern) beaches of Betio by the Second Marine Division. Betio Island had another name, Bititu, which crops up often in the contemporary reports, but Betio is used in this account.

The major part of the Japanese defenses of Makin Atoll were around Butaritari Village. The Intelligence Annex to Rear Admiral Turner's Operation Order stated that there were 600 to 900 defending troops. This was a considerable overestimate of troop strength but reasonably close for total Japanese and Korean military and paramilitary personnel.

The Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area, on 14 January 1944, after questioning the prisoners and reading the captured documents, believed that there had been a few less than 300 Japanese defending troops. These had been assisted by 100 naval aviation personnel and 150 Japanese laborers (possibly armed), and about 220 Korean laborers, the majority of whom surrendered when an opportunity occurred.[64]

[64] JICPOA Bulletin No. 4–44, "Japanese Defenses Makin Atoll."

Betio Island in Tarawa Atoll was much more strongly defended and heavily garrisoned than Butaritari Island in Makin Atoll. The Intelligence Annex to Rear Admiral Turner's order estimated that there were 2,500 troops in the garrison force and 1,000 other construction troops. As far as garrison troops is concerned this was a very good guess. As far as construction troops is concerned, it was just a fair guess; there were considerably more.

On 3 February 1944, the Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area, reported that total Japanese strength on Tarawa was 4,836.

> Of these, on Tarawa, only 2,619 could be considered first line troops. An additional 800 were reserves of limited value, and the rest can be reckoned non-effective for practical purposes, consisting largely of Korean laborers. . . .
>
> The bulk of the 4th Construction Unit on Tarawa consisted of 4 "dan" of Korean coolies, designated by the names of their leaders—TOKUYAMA, MATSUYAMA, KANEDA and TOMODA. These averaged 200 men each and were subdivided into 5 "han." There was in addition, a group of Japanese workmen, carpenters, blacksmiths, divers, laborers, truck drivers, cooks, and intendance and medical personnel. This group averaged between 100 and 200. The whole unit was under the command of a Naval Civilian Engineer (Kaigun Gishi Suga).[65]

Betio Island was well defended on all sides.

> The northern beaches of Betio were chosen as the preferred landing beaches because they vouchsafed better opportunities for securing a foothold than the others.[66]

Without knowing the Marine thinking behind this statement, it may be pointed out that landings on either the western or southern beaches would have exposed the approaching landing craft to enfilade fire, while the beaches chosen to the eastward of the long pier did not involve this hazard. Mining and obstruction of Betio Island beaches fronting on the lagoon had not been accomplished on 20 November 1943, while it had been accomplished on the southern and western beaches.

In any case, the Japanese alibi published 3 May 1944 by the Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) for their own benefit indicated that the Marines chose wisely.

> The beaches where the enemy landed were the points where both our

[65] JICPOA Bulletin 8–44, pp. 1–4.

[66] James R. Stockman, *The Battle for Tarawa* (Washington: Historical Section, Division of Public Information Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1947), p. 5.

fortified positions lacked equipment and our troop disposition was weak, and especially points where there were no anti-tank obstacles.

It was early decided that our assaults at Makin and Tarawa would be:

1. simultaneous
2. by troops carried in amphibian tractors (LVTs) (3 waves at Tarawa, 1 at Makin), followed
3. by medium tanks carried in medium sized landing craft (LCM), followed
4. by troops carried in personnel landing craft (LCVP).

WATCHTOWER VERSUS GALVANIC

A comparison of the Expeditionary Forces and their supporting combatant units as initially assigned by CINCPAC, for WATCHTOWER and for GALVANIC, follows:

WATCHTOWER (78) *August 1942*	*GALVANIC* (191) *November 1943*
1 battleship	13 battleships (7 OBB)
11 heavy cruisers	8 heavy cruisers
3 light cruisers	4 light cruisers
3 carriers	4 carriers
	4 light carriers
	4 jeep carriers
	1 carrier transport
33 destroyers	56 destroyers
	14 destroyer escorts
5 minesweepers	3 minesweepers
13 transports	16 attack transports
4 fast transports	
5 cargo ships	4 attack cargo ships
	9 merchant transports
	38 landing ships (tank)
	11 landing crafts (infantry)
	2 landing ships (dock)
19,000 troops from First Marine Division Reinforced and Supporting Elements.	35,000 troops from Second Marine Division Reinforced and 27th Army Infantry Division Reinforced and Supporting Elements.

All the 78 ships named by CINCPAC for WATCHTOWER participated, while there were numerous additions and deletions to the 191 ships named for GALVANIC. The nine merchant transports slated for the Gilberts shrank to seven, but two Navy transports and seven merchant cargo ships were added. One of the main GALVANIC deletions was the group of the 11 Landing Crafts (Infantry). Six submarines supported WATCHTOWER while 10 submarines supported GALVANIC. The logistic support ships for WATCHTOWER were but three lonely tankers, while for GALVANIC they were legion.

When the operation was over, a detailed compilation indicated that the Northern Landing Force had about 6,500 assault troops and the Southern Landing Force about 19,000. Following close along were 7,600 garrison troops. Logistic support included 6,000 vehicles and 117,000 tons of cargo.[67]

MOVEMENT TO THE OBJECTIVE

The movement to the objective was complicated by:

a. the necessity to meld the gunfire support ships and air support ships from the Central Pacific with the main transport force—12 attack transports—coming from the South Pacific.
b. the necessity to gather together garrison forces from the widely separated islands of Tutuila, Funafuti, Nukufetau, and Wallis, and to put together new model amtracs and their crews at Tutuila.
c. the vast distances and the slow speeds—8.5 knots—which the LSTs could steadily steam.
d. the desire to confuse the enemy as to the objective should a patrolling Japanese submarine have a chance encounter with any ships of the task force. This was to be accomplished by having the movements take on a general aspect of ships making passage from Pearl to the South Pacific.
e. the need to loan part of the fast carrier task forces allocated to GALVANIC to bomb Rabaul in support of imminent landings on Bougainville Island in the South Pacific Area, in early November.

[67] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, Report on GALVANIC, 4 Dec. 1943.

KEEPING THE JAPANESE OFF BALANCE

On 27 October 1943, amphibians from the South Pacific Force landed in the Treasury Islands the stepping stone between the Middle to the Upper Solomons. Five days later the step was completed with a full blown amphibious landing on Bougainville in the Northern Solomons. On 11 November carrier aircraft started sweeping across the southeast extension of the Japanese Empire, striking Rabaul on that day and working North through the Gilberts and Marshalls on the 18th and 19th. It was hoped that Japanese realization of the real objective of the Central Pacific Force would be made difficult if not impossible, until Dog Day minus Two (18 November).

PRE-DOG DAY ARMY AIR FORCE BOMBING ATTACKS

An Air Force history records:

> When the Marines stormed ashore at Tarawa on 20 November, the Seventh Air Force heavy bombers had completed 13 strike missions for a total of 141 sorties.[68]

However, of these 141 sorties, the majority had not been directed against the Gilberts, but against the Marshalls.

This was in support of the Fifth Fleet point of view that it was most desirable to have the air bases in the Marshall Islands, from which the Japanese might conduct air attacks against the Assault Force, placed out of commission, at least temporarily, during the early days of the landings.

Unfortunately, while the great majority of the B-24 sorties against Tarawa and Makin got through to drop their bombs in the target area, a large number of the sorties for the Marshalls went awry. Eleven Army Air Force bombers did not reach Mille on 14 November and returned to base. Only five of 11 got through to Mille on the 15th. On the 16th, nine Army Air Force bombers headed for Kwajalein but were unable to make bomb runs because of cloud cover and then due to Japanese interception. On the 18th, none of the 22 bombers due to strike Wotje got through to the primary target.

The detailed record shows that 67 B-24s of the Seventh Air Force (based in Canton and the Ellice Islands) raided the Gilberts in the week before the amphibians landed, as follows:

[68] (a) Operational History of the Seventh Air Force, 6 Nov. 1943–31 Jul. 1944, pp. 8, 9, 10; (b) CTF 57, Report of Air Strike Operations, Ser 0092 of 16 Dec. 1943.

D-7 (13 November)	Tarawa	17 bombers 8,500 to 15,000 feet
D-6 (14 November)	Tarawa	9 bombers 16,500 to 17,500 feet
D-5 (15 November)	Makin (in lieu of Mille)	3 bombers (no altitude given)
D-4 (16 November)	Tarawa (in lieu of Kwajalein)	1 bomber 9,000 feet
D-3 (17 November)	Tarawa	3 bombers 2,500 feet
D-2 (18 November)	Tarawa (in lieu of Mille)	2 bombers 12,000 feet
D-1 (19 November)	Tarawa	20 bombers 1,500 to 11,000 feet
	Makin	12 bombers 10,000 to 10,400 feet

On 19 November the heavy bombers estimated that 55 percent of the demolition bombs and 65 percent of the fragmentation bombs hit the target.[69]

Total results based on the detailed daily operational reports show that Tarawa received from the Seventh Air Force 34.5 tons of bombs during these seven crucial days and Makin 27.5 tons, the latter largely on Dog Day minus one. These figures bore little resemblance to the ratio of strength between the Japanese defenses at Betio and Butaritari Islands.

The Japanese made things no easier for the B-24s by raiding Nanomea on the night of 11 November and Funafuti on 13 and 17 November, destroying four bombers and damaging 24 others. But no Japanese fighter planes were met over Tarawa or Makin on any of these crucial days by our planes. Perhaps the light attacks by the heavy land-based bombers from the 15th to the 18th encouraged the Japanese to believe that the Gilberts were not to be the next objective.

TARAWA ATOLL

Shore bombardment by three cruisers and two destroyers was planned for Betio Island in Tarawa Atoll on Dog Day minus one on the assumption that control of the air in the Gilberts would be achieved by Central Pacific Forces on that day.

Such a bombardment was a necessity since there were two 8-inch coast defense guns at both the east and the west ends of the island which needed to be knocked out before the transports could move into the Transport Area,

[69] *Ibid.*

as well as numerous 14-centimeter coast defense guns and 127-millimeter twin mount dual-purpose guns, which would make mincemeat of any landing craft within their considerable range.

The dozens of other dual-purpose guns backed up the log barricades which defended a fair share of the beach areas. Thirteen anti-tank trenches covered the various approaches to the airfield from the beaches. Anti-boat mines and high double apron wire fences off shore, and double apron low wire fences on the beach, strengthened the Japanese positions. Ammunition and personnel shelters, large emplacements for guns and fire control equipment, and the main command post were constructed of very heavy concrete, 3 feet to 12 feet thick, as their importance justified. Coral sand, sand bags and coconut logs covered the shelters and emplacements.

Summed up:

> Tarawa was the most heavily defended atoll that would ever be invaded by Allied forces in the Pacific. With the possible exception of Iwo Jima, its beaches were better protected against a landing force than any encountered in any theater of war throughout World War II.[70]

MAKIN ATOLL

There was no shore bombardment of Japanese positions on Makin Atoll planned for Dog Day minus one, primarily because the Japanese defensive preparations on this atoll were judged insufficient to necessitate one.

Japanese defenses were restricted to the 300-yard center part of 400-yard wide Butaritari Island. This center area was well defined by an anti-tank ditch stretching from the ocean to the lagoon, and an anti-tank barricade at each end. These anti-tank defenses were backed up by fire trenches. Nothing larger than an 8-centimeter (3.2) anti-boat gun and anti-aircraft machine guns (70-mm and 80-mm) were known to be in the defensive armament. Most of these guns were on the seaward beach areas a good distance (2.5 miles) from where the early landings were planned to take place.

Thirty-four planes bombed Makin on Dog Day minus one. Five definite hits were registered on designated targets. Unusual trouble with bomb releases was experienced during this operation. The over-all results were reasonably effective even though Commander Task Group 50.2, Rear Admiral

[70] Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls* (Army), p. 74.

Arthur W. Radford, observed in his GALVANIC report: "Bombing accuracy was not up to expectancy." [71]

PRE-DOG DAY HEAVY CRUISER SHORE BOMBARDMENT—BETIO

Early on the morning of Friday, 19 November, Cruiser Division Five, Task Unit 50.3.2 (plus destroyers *Erben* and *Hale*), under the command of Rear Admiral E. G. Small, was temporarily detached from its protective screening duty in Fast Carrier Task Group 50.3, when about 100 miles south of Tarawa Atoll, and ordered to bombard selected targets on Betio Island.

The Bombardment Plan called for 90 minutes of firing by the 8-inch turrets during a two-hour period. The destroyers did not participate in the bombardment.

Commander Task Unit 50.3.2 reported that seven or eight coast defense guns fired at his ship during their shore bombardment efforts, the Japanese batteries opening fire first, at 1116. Ranges varied from 22,300 yards to 8,600 yards. Cruiser air spot was used. Enemy straddles were numerous but there were no hits. Three enemy guns at the eastern end of Betio were still firing when the bombardment came to an end at 1321 due to the expenditure of the allowance of ammunition authorized for bombardment. The three ships fired 1,941 eight-inch shells as well as eighty-two 5-inch shells (about 250 tons). The Unit Commander reported later that:

> This operation, as did the bombardment of Wake, demonstrated the difficulty of destroying well emplaced guns either by air or surface bombardment. Many straddles were obtained, but hits were a matter of chance.[72]

Neither Commander Task Group 54 (Turner) nor his subordinate, Commander Task Group 53 (Hill), mentioned this bombardment in the main part of their reports on GALVANIC. The latter was to learn early the following morning that the cruisers had not knocked out the 8-inch coast defense guns, their principal task. Turret gun patterns had been irregular and estimated as large as 1,600 yards, probably caused by the use of reduced powder charges.

The Cruiser Division Commander did not request authority to stick around

[71] CTG 50.2, letter, FF 11/A16-3, Ser 00133 of 5 Dec. 1943, para 2(e) chronology.

[72] (a) CTG 50.3.2 Action Report, Ser 00155 of 2 Dec. 1943, p. 11; (b) Japanese Military Action in the Gilbert Islands, PACMIRS Captured Document #MR-50 (D-65) dated 3 May 1944; (c) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Monthly Operations Report, November 1943, para 22.

to continue the effort to knock out the Japanese guns. The Japanese asserted that they fired 46 rounds of 8-inch and 104 rounds of 5-inch in reply to the bombardment, but did not claim any hits.

PRE-DOG DAY CARRIER AIR ATTACKS

Six carrier groups containing six large carriers (CV), five cruiser-hulled carriers (CVL), and eight merchant ship-hulled carriers (CVE), and carrying a total of some 900 planes provided the naval carrier air support for GALVANIC.

Carrier air strikes were made at Tarawa Atoll on the 18th and 19th, and on Makin Atoll on the 19th, but the main carrier air strike effort was made against the Japanese air bases in the Marshalls and on Nauru Island.

On 18 November, carrier aircraft dropped 115 tons of bombs on Tarawa and this was followed with 69 tons the following day. On 19 November carrier aircraft dropped 95 tons of bombs on Butaritari Island in Makin Atoll. The *Enterprise* reported that "by the end of the day, AA fire had practically ceased."

Japanese aircraft made unsuccessful counterattacks on the carrier air groups on 18 November.

TIME SCHEDULE

The schedule of the Assault Plan was:

Dog Day—20 November 1943 Assault forces arrive
Dog plus one Day—21 November 1943 Anti-aircraft and coast artillery batteries arrive
Dog plus four Day—24 November 1943 First echelon construction units arrive
Dog plus eight Day—28 November 1943 Apamama Garrison units arrive.

STAY AND FIGHT

In order that there would be no question in the mind of those serving in the combatant ships of the Assault Force as to whether or not they would be expected to scurry away when the Marines were established ashore, the Operation Plan provided:

> Most combatant ships of the Assault Force will remain at Makin and Tarawa or Apamama for the protection of transports, and support of our Fleet until the withdrawal of Makin, Tarawa, and Apamama garrison groups, at a time estimated to be about Dog plus Twelve to Fourteen Day.

The Covering Force was informed that they should plan on being in the area two weeks. A tough fight for the Gilberts was expected and prepared for.[73]

TO THE MARINES

Before the Marines had arrived at Tarawa, their Commanding General told them:

> Our Navy screens our operations and will support our attack tomorrow morning with the greatest concentration of aerial bombardment and naval gunfire in the history of warfare. It will remain with us until our objective is secured and our defenses are established. Garrison forces are already en route to relieve us as soon as we have completed our job of clearing our objectives of Japanese forces.[74]

In this manner, Major General Julian Smith answered these two questions in every regular Marine's mind after Guadalcanal:

Is the Navy going to really stay and closely support us?

Is the Army really going to relieve us, as they are supposed to do?

And the Commanding General added prophetically:

> What we do here will set a standard for all future operations in the Central Pacific area . . . your success will add new laurels to the glorious traditions of our Corps.

The Second Marines did just that.

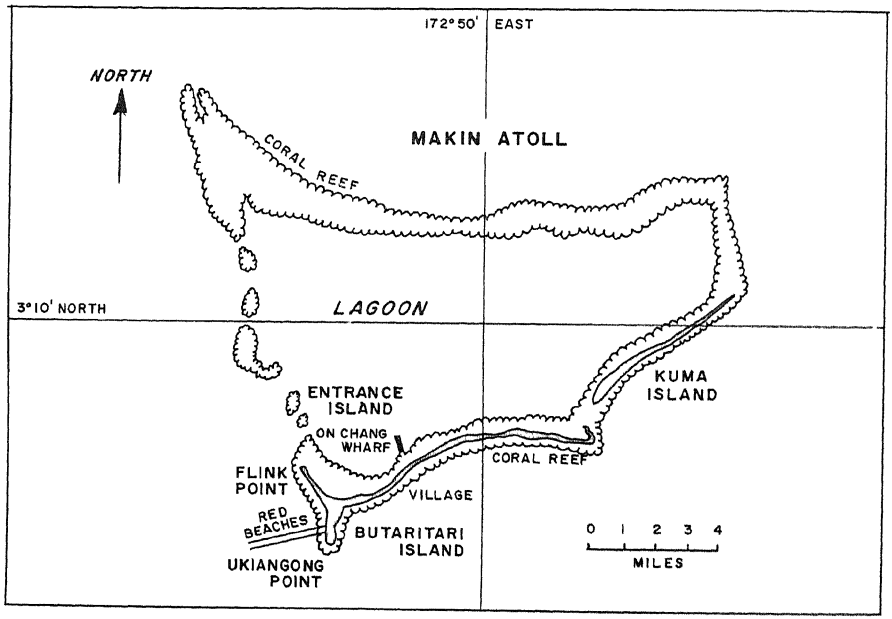
TO ALL HANDS

Before All Hands had been turned in for a catnap on 19 November before a long tomorrow, they could read on their bulletin boards another sobersides message from Rear Admiral Turner addressed to the officers and men of his Assault Force:

[73] COMFIFTHFLT Op Plan CEN 1–43, 25 Oct. 1943.

[74] Major General Julian C. Smith, USMC, COMGENSECONDMARDIV to his Marines, letter, 19 Nov. 1943.

Units attached to this force are honored in having been selected to strike another hard blow against the enemy by capturing the Gilbert Islands. The close cooperation between all arms and Services, the spirit of loyalty to each other, and the determination to succeed displayed by veteran and untried personnel alike, gives me complete confidence that we will never stop until we have achieved success. I lift my spirits with this unified team of Army, Navy and Marines whether attached to ships, aircraft, or ground units, and I say to you that I know God will bless you and give you the strength to win a glorious victory.



Makin Atoll.

CHAPTER XVII

The Pushover—Makin

Rear Admiral Turner was at Makin Atoll. He was at Tarawa Atoll only in mind and in spirit His single general comment to me about that part of GALVANIC was:

> Tarawa—that was a real toughie. When you get up on all the details, we will discuss it.

And then perhaps as an afterthought:

> It was a g.d. painful lesson—but a necessary one.[1]

TACTICAL SURPRISE ESSENTIAL

On the assumption that the Japanese Air Fleets were still imbued with the same strong offensive attitude they had displayed during WATCHTOWER and TOENAILS, it was obvious that there could be no two or three-day preparatory or pre-landing shore bombardment of the Japanese defended atolls we sought to capture in the Gilberts, if we were to avoid strong air attacks on the transports before the Landing Force was put ashore. Late in 1943 there was good reason to believe that, with a couple of days' warning, the Japanese would be able to mass over the Gilbert Islands greater shore-based air strength than we could oppose, on anything like an even basis, with our seaborne air strength.

As Admiral Turner frequently said, he did not like to see Marines or soldiers swim, so mass Japanese air attacks on the transports off Makin and Tarawa were to be avoided, if practical. Offering the transports as bait was certainly not a desirable way of creating an opportunity for reducing Japanese air strength, by itself a worthwhile objective.

PASSAGE TO THE OBJECTIVE

Because tactical surprise was deemed an essential for success in GAL-

[1] Turner.

VANIC,[2] the passage to the objective by the major assault forces of the amphibians was devious rather than direct.

The vast majority of the amphibians took their departure from Hawaii and New Zealand ports with only the knowledge that their objective was "an island in an atoll in the far Pacific." As senior and experienced an officer as the Commander, Transport Group, Southern Attack Force, insists that he did not know his atoll destination until he arrived at the New Hebrides for final rehearsals. He also remembers that the second thing he was told about his objective was that Tarawa Atoll had to be oriented ten degrees to the left on all maps and charts to be used.[3] This later proved to be true.

Accordingly, the passage to the Gilberts was quickly spent by all hands in studying the multiple operation orders and in trying to apply to them the lessons learned in the rehearsals. On one ship:

> A relief map of the portion of Butaritari, including Entrance Island, which contained the target areas was constructed of asbestos cement, scale 1″=250 yards. Grapenuts sprinkled in a matrix of thick shellac, and sprayed with green paint were used to simulate the thick growth of trees, and provided a fairly realistic picture.[4]

The main diversionary event of the passage for those ships of the Assault Forces originating in Hawaii was the "Crossing of the Line" ceremonies, during which King Neptune properly inducted the thousands who previously had never sailed south of the equator. The destroyer *LeHardy* logged the ceremonies in this way:

> 0830 Commenced Sacred Shellback induction ceremonies on fantail. Neptunus Rex in Supreme Command.
>
> * * * * *
>
> 1040 Secured from equatorious induction exercises. All ship's company are now worthy Shellbacks.[5]

The Northern and Southern Attack Forces of Task Force 54 had a general area rendezvous on 17 November some 600 miles southeast from their objectives. This rendezvous was near the junction of the 180th parallel of longitude with the equator. From here the two forces took up parallel northwesterly courses toward the Gilberts. Rear Admiral Turner sent to the

[2] (a) Forrestel, *Admiral Spruance,* p. 100A; (b) Driscoll, *Pacific Victory,* p. 55.

[3] Knowles.

[4] *Idaho* (BB-42), Action Report, Ser 0010 of 5 Dec. 1943, p. 8.

[5] *LeHardy* (DE-20) War Diary, Nov. 1943.

Commander Southern Attack Force by destroyer seamail the following letter of instructions:

> Please try to stay within 25 miles of TF 52 during the run up.[6]

Late that day the flagship *Pennsylvania* logged TF 53 in sight 18 miles to the southwestward.

While the amphibians were moving northwesterly up towards their objectives on the 17th, 18th, and 19th of November 1943, the four carrier task forces of the Central Pacific Force carried out reconnaissance sweeps and air strikes to the north and west of the amphibians. With the exception of the Relief Carrier Group, they closed to covering distance on the day prior to the landings.

The bombing of Mille Atoll in the Marshall Islands, 200 miles north of Makin Atoll, during this period and the early days of the assault landings was important, for it was on Mille's airstrip that short range Japanese planes from the large air base on Maleolap Atoll, also in the Marshalls, could touch down and refuel before moving south to harass the GALVANIC forces. Otherwise, the Japanese planes would be compelled to carry belly tanks, which either limited their combat capability, or if dropped early, limited their chances of returning to base.

Surface, radar, and sonic reports of possible enemies under, on, and over the water occurred with increasing frequency as the Task Force neared its destination.

During the afternoon of 18 November, Commander Northern Attack Force, CTF 52, estimated from radio intercepts that a Japanese plane had contacted one of our search planes about 120 miles east of Apamama. The next forenoon the combat air patrol shot down a Japanese plane in this same area.

FIRST JAPANESE AIR CONTACT OF THE AMPHIBIANS

A small task group of three LSTs (Task Group 54.4) escorted by a single destroyer, while en route independently from Canton Island to Makin Atoll, was picked up by Japanese air reconnaissance about 1700 on 18 November 1943. This contact provided the first positive clue to the Japanese that the amphibians were headed for the Gilbert Islands.

The Japanese patrol bomber took a good look at the small formation,

[6] RKT to Commander Southern Attack Force, letter, 17 Nov. 1943.

closing to about three miles, but having survived some 64 rounds of 5-inch, a few scattered rounds of 3-inch and much 50-caliber, turned away and took the bad news home. At this time the *Dale* (DD-353) and LSTs 31, 78 and 179, the ships comprising TG 54.4, were about 150 miles east of Apamama Atoll and 200 miles southeast of Tarawa.

Not until the sun was setting, over 24 hours later, did two Japanese scout bombers return to drop their float lights and "Welcome to the Gilberts" bombs on the amphibians, who by now were only 45 miles from Makin Atoll. However, during the early afternoon the formation had been looked at by several other Japanese scout bombers. They did not come close enough to be fired at but one of these scout bombers was shot down by carrier aircraft coached to the scene.[7]

The Task Group Commander, Commander Adrian M. Hurst, reported this last action of the 19th as follows:

> It had now become quite dark and visibility was quite limited. At 1926 starboard gun crews of LST 31 sighted a plane by means of its exhaust flame and engine noise coming in low and fast on the starboard quarter of the formation, following the range of the two lighted buoys, heading over the bows of the LST 31. LST 31 opened fire immediately followed by LST 78 at a range of approximately 1500 yards from the LST 31. The first burst of the fire from the starboard 20mm guns of the LST 31 appeared to take effect and the plane burst into flames. . . . The plane crashed into the sea after passing over the bow. . . .
>
> It is believed that each LST, and in particular the LST 31, is deserving of considerable credit. These LSTs are manned almost entirely by Naval Reserve commissioned and enlisted personnel of limited experience and training. This was their first war mission and first enemy action. The job was well done and the lessons learned very worthwhile. It should be noted that had the plane attack been successful, it might have seriously jeopardized the mission of the Attack Force Galvanic Operation on the following morning.[8]

The reason for this latter statement was that these LSTs carried all the amphibious tractors (amtracs) for the Makin Atoll assault. These amtracs could crawl over coral reefs with a boat load of troops carried above their crunching treads.

[7] COMLSTGRP Eight, Action Report, 18–19 November, 1943, Ser 010–43 of 18 Dec. 1943, encl. (B).

[8] *Ibid.*

AMTRACS FOR THE ASSAULT PHASE OF GALVANIC

On 18 September 1943, CINCPOA issued to major subordinate commanders "to facilitate planning, and [for] implementation" his Joint Staff study on GALVANIC. In this it was stated:

> That due to the slow speed of LSTs and in view of the desire to reduce the period during which loaded transports might be subjected to enemy aerial bombardment, transports should not be required to reduce speed to accompany LSTs in approaching the objectives. *LSTs should therefore be employed for the landings of personnel and material subsequent to the assault phase.*[9]

In General Holland Smith's *Coral and Brass,* the author takes Admiral Turner to task in regard to amtracs by writing:

> During planning at Pearl Harbor, I was appalled to find Kelly Turner shortsightedly opposing the use of amtracs. . . .[10]

When questioned in regard to this, Admiral Turner said:

> There was no opposition to amtracs as such. There was opposition to 'additional amtracs' beyond those already assigned to the Second Division and carried in the large transports. This opposition stemmed from the requirements that if there were to be 'additional amtracs' we had to get the 'additional amtracs' to the Gilbert Islands aboard LSTs. Because of their slow speed, this would bring the LSTs into the Japanese air reconnaissance area well ahead of the large transports whose speed of advance was 50% higher than the LSTs.
>
> You will find somewhere in CINCPAC's instruction that he didn't want this to happen, and I was supporting his instructions. When the Marines' urgent desires were made known to Spruance and Nimitz, they waived their instructions in the matter.
>
> As it turned out, the LSTs carrying amtracs were the first ships sighted by the Japs and gave the Japs an extra twenty-four hours to gather their defensive strength. Who knows, that extra twenty-four hours' notice may have been the necessary margin for the submarine that sank the *Liscome Bay* to reach her station.[11]

An indication of Rear Admiral Turner's favorable thinking in regard to amtracs at this time, October 1943, is contained in the following letter which he wrote to Major General Holland M. Smith:

> 1. Your recommendation for substitution of armored amphibious cargo tractors LVT(A)(2) for the unarmored type now in the Central Pacific

[9] CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Joint Staff Study—Gilbert Islands Operation, Ser 00187 of 18 Sep. 1943, Appendix A, p. 1.

[10] Smith, p. 120.

[11] Turner.

> Area, as set forth in reference (a) is concurred in by endorsement to that document.
>
> 2. It is apparent that vehicles of this type, together with the DUKW, should be available for employment in large numbers by forces engaged in operations in the Central Pacific Area, thereby making the establishment of training facilities and a replacement pool in the Hawaiian Islands desirable. . . . " [12]

The capabilities of the LVT were not widely known at the time GALVANIC was being planned as the following quote from the GALVANIC Report of Commander, Transport Division Four shows:

> The *Harris* departed for Samoa on October 10, 1943, having been assigned the duty of making tests to learn whether LVT(1)s would operate satisfactorily on coral reefs and whether it was feasible to land medium tanks from LCM(3)s on coral reefs.

Even while these tests were being carried out, Rear Admiral Turner made arrangements for the LSTs to proceed to Samoa to load the LVT(2) (armored) amtracs at the U. S. Naval Station on 5th and 6th of November. The LSTs were directed to exercise in unloading the new amtracs by using the beaches at Funafuti, Ellice Islands, enroute to the Gilberts.

HOW HOUR, DOG DAY FOR GALVANIC

During the early planning phase, a How Hour, the hour for landing, as early as 0500 had been considered. Gradually as the complexity of the task was examined in detail, How Hour was retarded. Rear Admiral Turner wrote this was

> because of the later tides [which led to the landing being postponed one day], to permit planes to have a better light, and to give gunfire ships a chance for counter battery against shore fire against transports.[13]

Prior to the actual landings, this important touchdown hour for the troops at the Red beaches was again retarded, to 0830 at Makin Atoll and to 0900 at Tarawa Atoll.

THE ASSAULT PHASE (1) MAKIN (2) TARAWA

The seagoing part of the GALVANIC amphibians' story for Makin will

[12] (a) COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, letter, C5A/L20/Ser 00134 of 30 Oct. 1943 in reply to COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS, Ser 00199 of 28 Oct. 1943; (b) As previously explained, a DUKW was an amphibious 2½-ton truck, an amtrac was an LVT.

[13] RKT to HWH, letter, 17 Nov. 1943.

be described in this chapter since that is where Rear Admiral Turner was positioned. In the next chapter, certain phases of the operation at Tarawa Atoll, a hundred miles away from his searching eyes, will be covered.

MAKIN WEATHER—20 NOVEMBER 1943

Sunrise for 20 November was computed to occur at 0612, which was shortly after the transports were due to arrive in the Transport Area. The day dawned fair with only a slight overcast and visibility was good. There was no particular surf as the wind out of the southeast was light. The long tradewind swell from the southeast was at a minimum. The moon was at the third-quarter and the temperature at 0600 was 83°F, promising a warm day. At 0726 a half-hour rain squall developed and the ocean became a bit choppy.[14]

THE APPROACH

Task Force 52 approached Makin Atoll from the southeastward. The larger ships picked up the low lying atoll on their radar about four in the morning at distances from 16 to 26 miles. The Task Group was somewhat ahead of schedule due to strong westerly currents, so since the moon had risen at 0100, the Force was zigzagged to reduce the advance in lieu of slowing down.

The Fire Support Units were detached at 0437 and moved ahead of the formation to catapult their spotter seaplanes about 0540. The *Pennsylvania* (BB-38) and *Minneapolis* (CA-36) maintained a position between the transports moving in to the Transport Area and Butaritari Island, ready to open counter battery fire in case an undetected coast defense gun might open fire.

MAKIN ATOLL

Gathered off Makin Atoll in the clear dawn of 20 November 1943, were four attack transports, an attack cargo ship, three LSTs and one new landing ship dock. They were carrying nearly 6,500 assault troops. Four old battle-

[14] (a) *USS Calvert* (APA-32) GALVANIC Action Report, 18 Nov. 1943; (b) *USS Leonard Wood* (APA-12) GALVANIC Action Report, 2 Dec. 1943.

ships (OBBs), four heavy cruisers, ten destroyers and one minesweeper were available to do a variety of tasks including clearing the lagoon area of mines, providing anti-aircraft protection and gunfire support to the troops, and, hopefully, anti-submarine protection to all ships present.

Within voice radio range were three new escort (jeep) carriers and their four destroyer escorts to provide close air support. Not too far over the horizon were three large carriers, (two of them CVLs on light cruiser hulls) and their powerful escort of three new battleships and six destroyers, primarily to provide protection against the Japanese Fleet and against air raids from the Marshalls, but also, on the day of the initial landing, to do a bit of Dog Day bombing of Japanese positions on Butaritari Island.

HOW HOUR

There had been a difference of opinion between Commander Landing Force and his superior, Commander Attack Force, as to just when How Hour should be.

Major General Ralph C. Smith had written the following personal memorandum to Rear Admiral Turner commenting on the Fifth Tentative Draft of CTF 52 Op Order 3–43:

> I believe that 0800 is too late for 'H' hour. Suggest 0730 as giving maximum time for landing troops during favorable tides. 'W' hour [the time for landing on the lagoon side of Butaritari] should be three hours (3) after 'H' hour.

Rear Admiral Turner in his reply said:

> Using LVTs and boats, I doubt that we can do any better.

And, in fact, he decided that the Navy could not do that well, for H-hour finally was set for 0830 and W-hour was set for two hours later, 1030.

WHERE ARE WE AT H-HOUR ON D-DAY?

The Commander of the three LSTs carrying the 32 amtracs for the first wave at Makin Atoll's Butaritari Island was worried on the morning of Dog Day that he was not going to be on station in time for his pre-How Hour launch of the amtracs. He later reported:

> *Dale* reported that they had made insufficient allowance for drift during the night, and that we were to the westward and northward of the Transport

Area. CTG 54.4 had been directed previously by CTG 52 to make more use of destroyer's navigation due to limited facilities in LSTs and the fact that *Dale* had radar and more adequate navigational equipment. Too much dependency was placed in *Dale's* navigation which fortunately was not enough out to cause the Task Group to miss making the scheduled landing at H-Hour.[15]

MINESWEEPING MAKIN

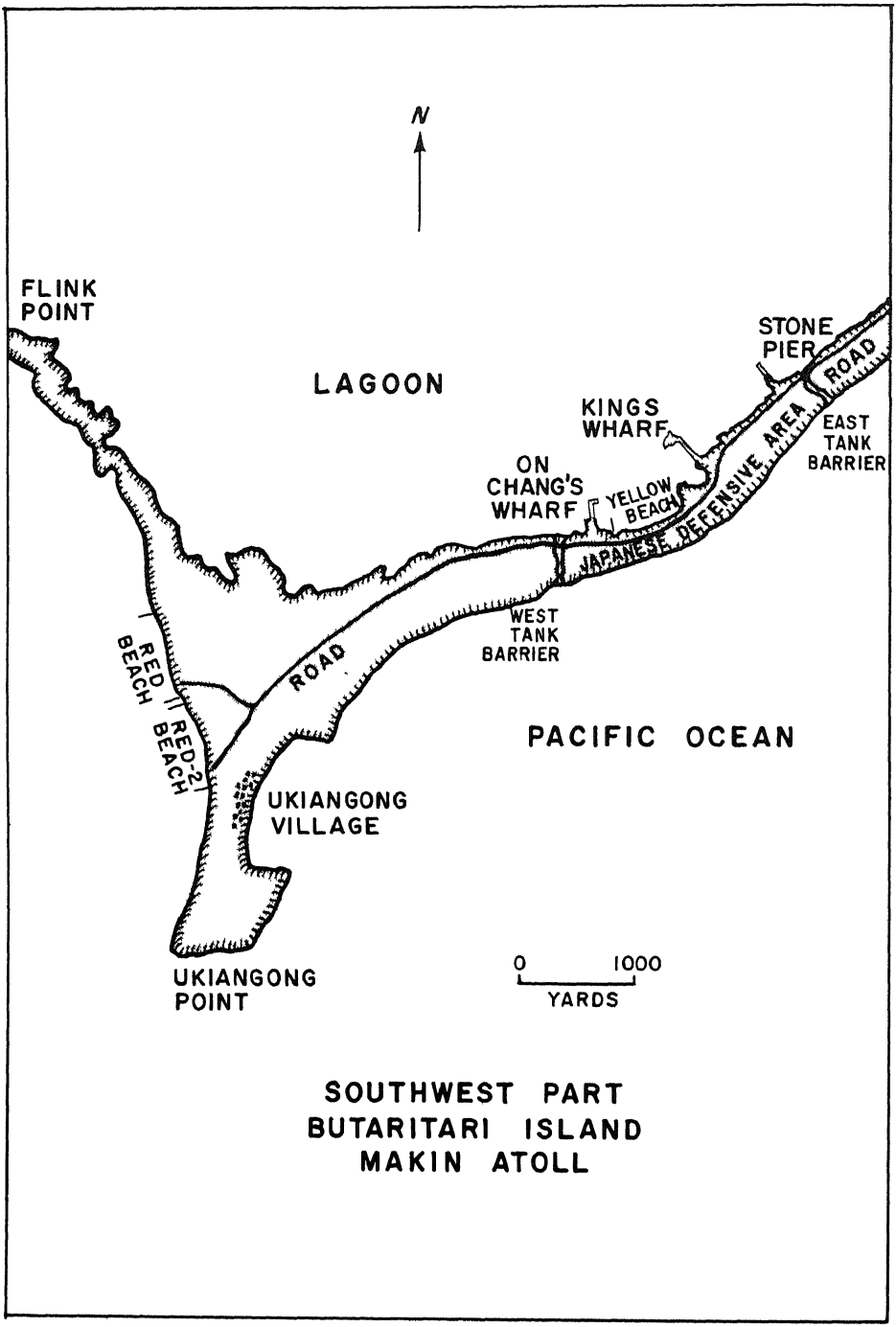
Because of the depth of the ocean, it was assumed that there were no mineable waters on the ocean side of Butaritari, so it was not necessary to have the minesweeper *Revenge* (AM-110) sweep the off beach ocean areas. When the *Neville* reported Entrance Island located in the main channel to Makin Lagoon was not defended by the Japanese, the *Revenge,* at 0938, was ordered in to sweep the lagoon. No mines were found in the lagoon area and the *Revenge,* strangely enough, was not fired upon from Butaritari Island. The *Revenge* continued its sweeping efforts into the late afternoon, 1721. By that time she had swept not only a channel into the lagoon but a good sized safe anchorage area within the lagoon. This anchorage permitted bringing transports as well as the three LSTs into the lagoon for the unloading of their LCTs and subsequently the bulk of the logistic support carried in the Assault Transports.[16]

LANDING THE ASSAULT WAVES—MAKIN

According to the Army's historians, the Scheme of Maneuver at Butaritari was "elaborate in the extreme and unlike any adopted before or since in the Pacific War." [17]

The first wave of troops was to be in amtracs, delivered by the LSTs, and the troops in this wave only were from the 105th Infantry Regiment. These amtrac troops, followed by the assault troops from two battalion combat teams of the 165th Infantry Regiment, were to land at How-Hour at Red Beach and Red Beach Two. The centers of these landing beaches were located 2,000 yards and 1,000 yards respectively to the north and west of Ukiangong Point on the ocean side of Butaritari Island.

[15] COMLSTGRP Eight, War Diary, 20 Nov. 1943.
[16] *Revenge* Ship's Log, 20 Nov. 1943.
[17] Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls* (Army) p. 41.



Southwest part Butaritari Island, Makin Atoll.

The assault troops from the other battalion combat team of the 165th Regiment were to land two hours later (William Hour) at Yellow Beach Two near On Chang's Wharf on the lagoon side of Butaritari Island. Again the lead wave in amtracs was to come from the 105th Infantry Regiment.

It was hoped by this Scheme of Maneuver to take the Japanese on the flank and rear while he was defending from the initial frontal attack.

The transports on the ocean side were to put their troops into landing craft via rope cargo nets while lying to in the Transport Area about 3.5 miles off Red Beach. From here the landing craft would move to the Rendezvous Area and take their station in their designated wave.

The transport *Neville* was to start her troops for Yellow Beach while lying to off Entrance Island just outside the lagoon. The LSD *Belle Grove* was to unload her LCMs, pre-loaded with tanks, from just inside the lagoon, and these LCMs were to be in the assault waves on Yellow Beach.

The execution of the landing phase did nothing to smooth out the complexities of the plan.

As the transports edged into the Transport Area on the southwest ocean side of Butaritari Island about 0600, and started to rapidly lower their landing craft, the Carrier Intercepter Group (TG 50.1) launched its fighter plane (VF) strafing attack and followed this with dive bombing and glide bombing attacks (VB and VT) on Butaritari Island. These attacks were scheduled from 0610 to 0640, but actually commenced at 0615. To those aboard the heavy support ships and transports the attacks were spectacular.

As a famous historian who was aboard the *Baltimore* off Makin recorded shortly thereafter:

> After some of the air bombs were dropped, one could see cocoanut palms shooting up into the air, the trunks being separated from the foliage and the tops coming down like shuttle cocks.[18]

A less enthusiastic assessment by those doing the chore read:

> The Makin strike (34 VSB and VT aircraft) in support of landing operations on D-Day, was directed to bomb military installations by the Support Aircraft Commander, although no such installations could be discovered. Bombs were accordingly dropped in the assigned space target area with unobserved results.[19]

The bombs dropped totaled 16 tons.

[18] Narrative by LCDR Samuel Eliot Morison, USNR, on 15 Dec. 1943. Operational Sound Recording OFR–36.

[19] CTG 50 (Commander Carrier Division 3) GALVANIC Report, Ser 0043 Dec. 1943, Encl. (B) p. 1.

Meanwhile, the wave circles of loaded LCVP in the rendezvous area were maintained in good formation in spite of wind and a heavy rain squall.

Long before our air bombardment had taken place, the battleships and cruisers had launched their spotting planes.

The first news from them was good:

> 0625: *Pennsylvania* spotting plane reported no breakers on RED Beaches with swells believed not to be over three feet in height.[20]

At 0640, the inadequately screened battleships and cruisers which were crowded into narrow maneuvering lanes, and, of necessity, frequently at only steerageway speeds, opened their prearranged shore bombardment against selected targets. The heavy cruiser *Minneapolis* got off the first salvo. Meanwhile the three hurrying and worried LSTs of Task Group 54.4 were hull down from their position to launch the amtracs, but were pushing along with wide open throttles.

The prearranged shore bombardment was due to last from 0640 to 0820 and then pick up again from 0850 to 0930. The latter gunfire was to be from secondary batteries and its purpose was to cover the advance of the troops to their initial objectives, as they moved away from the landing beaches toward the main Japanese defensive positions.

The next news was bad.

At 0747 Rear Admiral Turner, an old gunnery hand, was prompted to ask the *Mississippi* if she had had a turret casualty, since her Turret II had not fired for some minutes.

> The *Mississippi* (BB-41) reported that at 0728, during the second phase of her main battery bombardment, she had had a serious turret fire in turret II, which resulted in the deaths of 43 officers and men, and the wounding of another 19. Despite this handicap, the *Mississippi* continued her firing schedule.[21]

At 0750, all waves, except the essential LVT first wave, left the Rendezvous Area for the Line of Departure.[22]

The absence of the lead wave was not good, but the situation hopefully was about to change, since it appeared the panting and pounding LSTs were barely going to make the amtrac launch deadline. At the crucial minute,

[20] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR GALVANIC Report, 4 Dec. 1943, p. 15.

[21] (a) CTU 52.2.2, GALVANIC Report, Encl. (B), p. 2; (b) *Mississippi* (BB-41) GALVANIC Report Ser 0010 of 2 Dec. 1943; (c) COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, GALVANIC Report, Encl. (A) p. 17.

[22] *Calvert* (APA-32), *Leonard Wood* (APA-12), *Phelps* (DD-351) and *Macdonough* (DD-360) GALVANIC Reports.

LST-31 and LST-78 carrying the amtracs and the troops for the first assault wave arrived in position and:

> 0755. LST-31 debarked 17 LVTs in four minutes; LST-78 debarked 17 LVTs in five minutes.[23]

At 0750, the destroyers *Phelps* (DD-351) and *MacDonough* (DD-360) arrived in position just inside of 3,000 yards from the Red beaches to mark the Line of Departure. At 0810, the 32 amtracs carrying 460 men and landing craft carrying eight light tanks started in for the landing beaches. The scheduled big ship bombardment stopped at 0818, seven minutes before the fighter aircraft swept over Red Beach and Red Beach Two strafing these beaches. The amtracs added to the racket when they let go their rockets a half-mile from the beach and followed this up by rapidly firing their 50-caliber and 30-caliber machine guns.

There was little or no return fire, and no Japanese at or near the water's edge to greet the assault troops as they waded ashore.

The Commander of the LSTs wrote:

> 0830 How Hour. LVTs from LST-31 and LST-78 landed on RED beaches on schedule.[24]

The log entry was almost, but not exactly, correct; the weight of evidence is that the actual landing was at 0833.

There were no mines, barbed wire or other beach obstructions. That was good news, but the unsettling word at 0912 was the report that "hydrographic conditions were bad at both Red beaches." [25]

Some of the landing craft in the second and third assault waves had gotten within a boat's length of the beach before grounding, but many of them had grounded on hidden coral ledges or rocks as far as 120 feet from the beach, and some had broached.[26] Only about 15 yards of good beach existed at Red Beach.

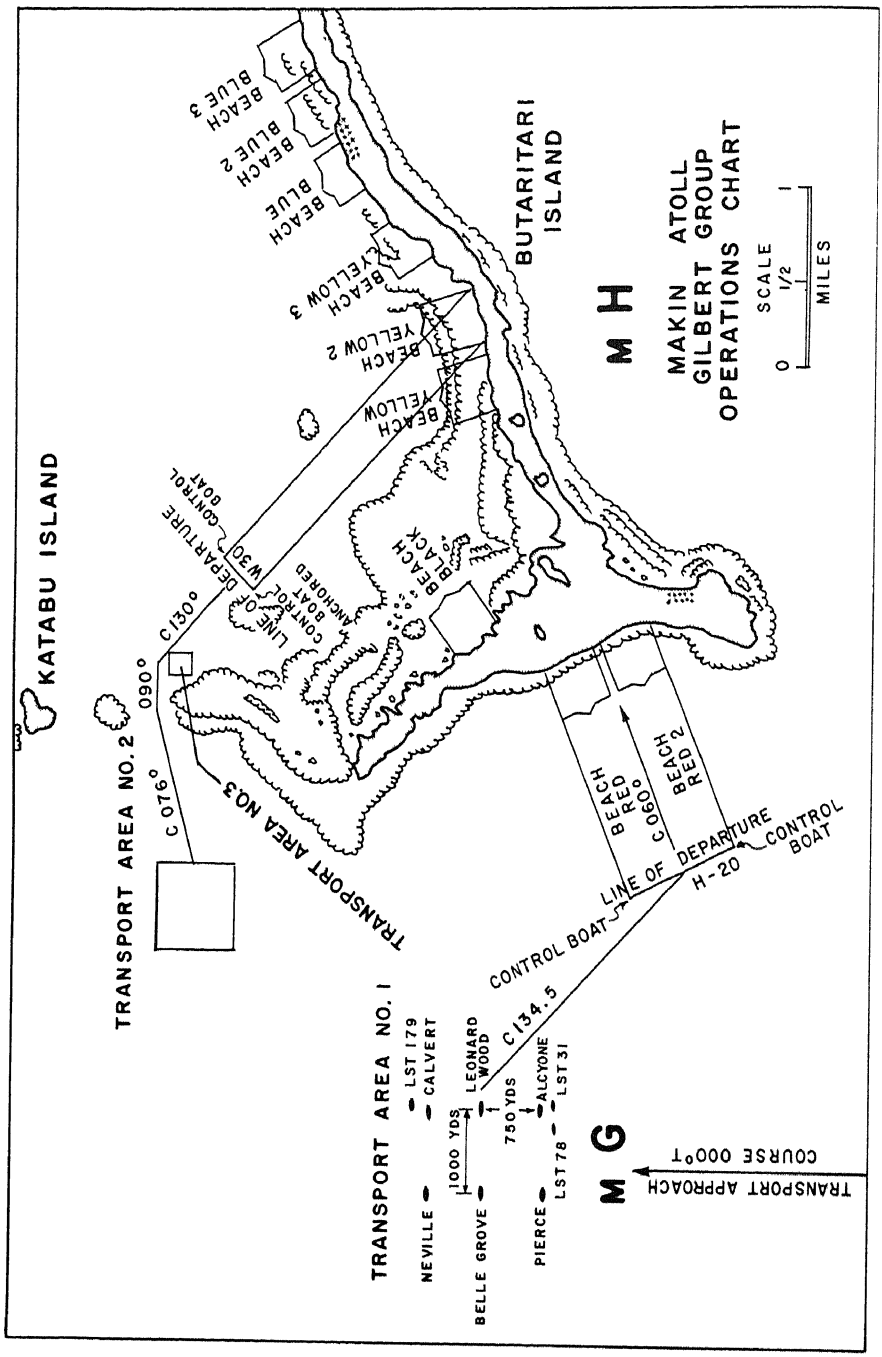
Because of delays due to the hydrographic hazards, the assault troops moved inland and away from the beach behind schedule. Since the prearranged gunfires tended to be completed minutes ahead of schedule and the troops did not use the procedures for bringing down call fire, there were long minutes when the Japanese defenders were not under harassing fire by naval guns.

[23] LSTGRP Eight, War Diary, 20 Nov. 1943.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR GALVANIC Report, p. 15.

[26] *Calvert* (APA-32) and *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) GALVANIC Reports.



Makin Atoll, Gilbert Island Group, Operations Chart.

All landing craft waves commencing with the third ran behind schedule in actually unloading troops, because there was inadequate beaching area. The fifth wave at Red Beach did not land until 1000, one hour behind schedule, and the seventh wave did not land at Red Beach Two until 1022, a bit more than an hour behind schedule. This made it difficult for the 165th Regiment to keep to its time schedule for forward movement.

In addition to delay in getting the troops ashore, there was trouble getting their equipment and immediate support ashore. Only the LVT wave and the first two landing craft waves were able to unload on Red Beach because the beach rapidly jammed up with troops and equipment. The remaining Red Beach waves landed on an individual basis of "may the best coxswain win." [27]

Some of their difficulties are indicated in this report.

> Hydrographic conditions on both beaches RED and RED–2 prevented boats from landing as organized waves, causing boats to land as best they could thru the coral. Subsequent experience during the unloading phase of the operation brought out the fact that on RED beach at high tide but one boat could reach the beach, none at low. At RED–2, five boats could beach at high tide, two at low. . . .[28]

As soon as the initial assault landing of the second and third waves was nothing more than a bad memory:

> The Beach Party and Boat Group Commander attempted to alleviate the poor beach conditions by conducting a hydrographic survey on three quarters (¾) of a mile of beach to determine the most suitable place for small boats to land. No such place existed for the beach was wholly rocks and coral.[29]
>
> * * * * *
>
> Red Beach having been found unusable and all boats there having been directed to Red Beach–2, the large number of boats attempting to land thereon resulted in a congestion that made traffic control extremely difficult and seriously delayed the unloading. . . .[30]

All witnesses did not see things the same way, but there was a consensus that only three to six landing craft could land at Beach Red at a time and only five at Beach Red Two during the period of three hours before and after flood tide. In any case, only 31 of a hoped-for 250 small landing craft (LCVP) loads of logistic support got ashore on the Red beaches on Dog Day. The medium-sized craft (LCM) did better. Eighteen out of 28 loads

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] COMTRANSDIV 20 GALVANIC Report, 3 Dec. 1943, p. 1.

[29] *Calvert,* GALVANIC Report, 28 Nov. 1943, p. 3.

[30] *Leonard Wood* GALVANIC Report, 2 Dec. 1943, p. 4.

were discharged at the beaches, including many 105-millimeter guns with D-4 tractors.

As planned, to shorten the turnaround time off the Red Beaches, the transports shifted closer to the beach soon after the initial assault waves touched down. There they commenced unloading into LSTs while continuing such unloading as possible by landing boats. The problem of the landing boats at the beach was reported on as follows:

> Unloading was accomplished when the boats had run up on coral obstructions. Several of these boats became swamped to the sinking point when their ramps were lowered . . . to disembark. All of the boats experienced difficulties in retracking, many of them incurring screw casualties, wrecked skegs, damaged rudders and holes in the hull.[31]

Two of the newer amphibian ships at Makin thought so little of recording what happened when, that they did not even submit an action report until nudged to do so by higher authority. Then their accounts were so brief as to be meaningless, as were their ships' logs.[32]

At 1001, ninety minutes after the first troops landed ashore, Rear Admiral Turner (CTF 52) dispatched the good news to COMFIFTHFLT that the troops had landed "against no opposition." This was almost literally true. Only one sailorman amphibian had been killed by Japanese fire in the actual landing and one other wounded. By nightfall, at all beaches, three naval amphibians were dead and 13 wounded.

LAGOON LANDINGS

Off the western entrance to Makin Lagoon, the *Neville* commenced lowering her landing craft at 0840 and the new landing ship dock *Belle Grove* (LSD-2), lying to nearby, began launching her LCMs at 0910. The LSD had 16 in the water in the next 12 minutes.

The landing craft formed up easily in the calm waters of the lagoon and eased in toward the Line of Departure.[33]

The first wave was made up of 16 amtracs launched from LST-179 inside the lagoon. The second and third waves were eight LCMs and seven LCMs respectively carrying medium tanks launched from the *Belle Grove.*

[31] *Calvert* GALVANIC Report, p. 2.

[32] COMTRANSDIV 20 to *Pierce* (APA-50) and *Alcyone* (AKA-7), Mailgram 152342 Dec. 1943.

[33] *Neville,* GALVANIC Report, 5 Dec. 1943.

The destroyers *MacDonough* and *Phelps,* commencing at 1005, provided covering fire for the advancing Yellow Beach waves. As the lead assault wave moved in towards the beach, each of the amtracs let go its six rockets. Planes from the jeep carriers swept over the beach area during the 10-minute period before the amtracs actually touched down at the shoreline at 1040.

Despite the previous air and gunnery bombardments, when the landing craft moved away from the Line of Departure toward Yellow Beach, there was bothersome sniper fire from Japanese troops concealed in two hulks sunk in the lagoon, and from other Japanese hidden in the underpinnings of the two wharfs between which the landing craft had to pass.

The *Neville* logged the assault waves' landing at Yellow Beach Two at 1040, 1041, 1043, 1045, 1050, 1056, 1101, and 1108. The troops from all Yellow Beach LCVP initially had to wade through water ranging from knee-deep to belly-deep, because the craft grounded well out from the shore line.

The ten-minute lag behind the prescribed How Hour of 1030 was caused by the amtracs in the lead wave slowing down during the last beach fly-over by the fighter aircraft (the tail enders of which were more than a bit late) and then not having enough reserve speed to make up lost ground.

As soon as the sniper fire was reported, Commander Support Aircraft called for air bombing attacks on the hulks. In the meantime, all the assault waves went on in to make their landings, disregarding the sniping fire from the hulks.

The close air support planes showed up and dropped their bombs, but the amphibians in the later waves continued to be shot at by the Japanese snipers. The Carrier Division Commander reported that two different groups of planes, five VBs and later six VTs bombed the two hulks, but all aircraft made misses.[34]

The story behind the misses was:

> 7-500 lb bombs and 5-100 lb bombs were dropped with a 2,000 foot release.
> Two pilots received no word of target assignment, due to inadequate communications.
> In spite of a number of near misses, no bomb hits were made because of the failure to allow for a 20-knot wind from the east.[35]

The destroyer *Dewey,* a bit stand-offish, did little better when she took the hulks under fire, from a considerable range.

[34] COMCARDIV 11, GALVANIC Report, Encl. (D), p. 3.

[35] (a) *Enterprise* (CV-6) Action Report, 15 Dec. 1943; (b) COMCARDIV 24 (CO *Corregidor*), GALVANIC Report, 5 Dec. 1943, p. 3.

Finally, at 1130, Rear Admiral Turner, CTF 52, directed the *Dewey* which had fired eleven full salvos at a range just under 3,000 yards, and ten salvos at 2,600 yards to

> get in close so that every shot hits those hulks. You have been firing into the beach. Report when you are 500 yards from the hulk.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Boats are waiting for you. When you are hitting the hulks, tell the boats to go in.

Eight minutes later, at 1138, the destroyer reported:

> We are hitting them.[36]

Troops and logistic support started landing again at 1245. The "overs" from the *Dewey* firing at the hulks alarmed some of the troops ashore, who urgently requested the gunfire cease. This was done.

The *Dewey* was not happy about navigating in the lagoon.

> Navigation inside the inner reefs was difficult and precarious due to the extremely narrow and devious passages between reefs and coral heads. The ship had to be steered largely by use of engines, there being so little maneuvering room. . . . [The chart] could be used only as a guide and navigation was a matter of seeing and avoiding the shallow water.[37]

Despite the *Dewey's* best efforts, the hulks had to be bombed and gunned again on the next day to stifle the last Japanese sniper.

The problem at Yellow Beach for all the landing craft, except the tracked LVTs, is explained by a despatch from the *Dewey.*

> Beach conditions very poor—boats beach about 200 yards from shore—2 to 3 feet of water from this point in. Supplies are difficult to land. Losses are still fairly small.[38]

During the first 24 hours, the amtracs picked up supplies from reef-grounded LCVPs and carried them on into Yellow Beach. This transshipment was a slow and man-consuming process.

From the naval point of view, the lack of strong antiaircraft fire during the air bombardment, or even against the slow flying spotting planes from the heavy ships, was indicative of the effectiveness of the pre-landing air bombings and gun bombardment against the modest defenses of Butaritari Atoll. The relative slowness of the troop advance was indicative of the determination of the Japanese to fight under difficult and discouraging circum-

[36] CTU 52.2.2 Action Report—Bombardment of Makin Island, Encl. (B), p. 13.
[37] *Dewey,* Action Report, 15 Dec. 1943, p. 5.
[38] *Ibid.,* p. 3.

stances. At the end of Dog Day, Makin was still being stoutly defended by its scanty troops. It was not until just before noon on Dog Day plus three that Makin Atoll was officially taken.

LOGISTIC PROBLEMS—MAKIN

Rear Admiral Turner remained off Makin Atoll in the *Pennsylvania* exercising active control of the logistic operations supporting our troops on Makin until 1730 on November 30th when TF 52 departed for Pearl Harbor. This, a long ten days, was indicative of how the logistic lessons of Guadalcanal had impressed the Commander Assault Force.

The equipment and logistic support of the assault troops at Makin Atoll was moved ashore, in the main, by the three LSTs and the three LCTs which the LSTs had carried on their backs to the atoll's lagoon and there launched. This was a big change from WATCHTOWER and some change from TOENAILS.

However, even with marked assistance from these hard working craft, there was delay in solving the planned Makin logistical support problem.

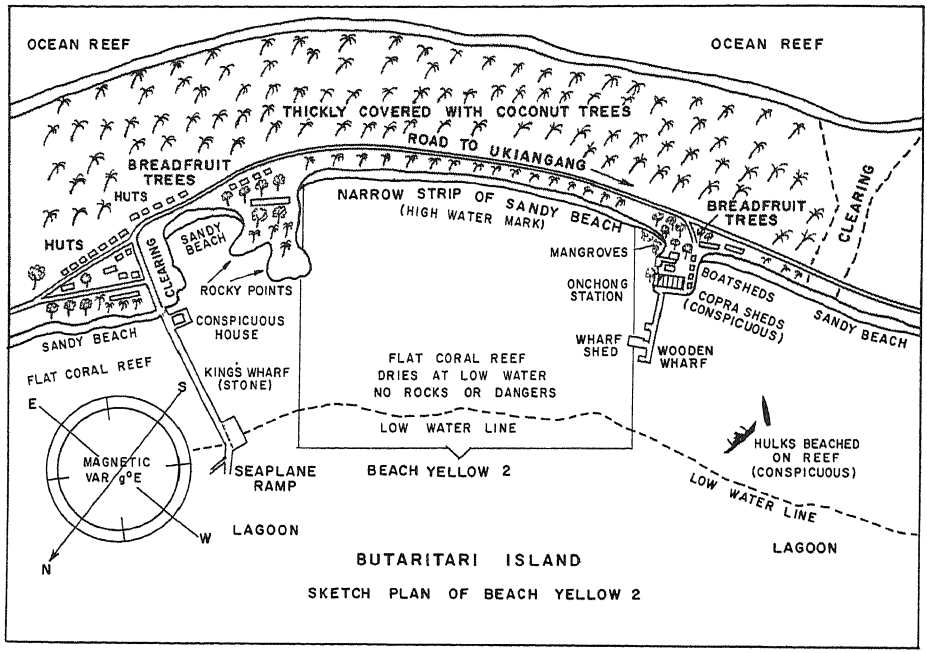
Landing craft problems at the Red beaches on Butaritari Island caused Commander Transport Group, late on the afternoon of Dog Day, to make his first big change in logistic plans. This was the decision to shift the major part of unloading to the lagoon (Yellow Beach Two and King's Wharf), commencing on Dog Day plus one. Additional Army personnel were requested and assigned to make this practical.

The second big logistic change was to unload from the transports only during daylight. This change was reported to higher authority as follows:

> On receiving report that unloading at Red Beaches was impractical during darkness due to tidal conditions, and that unloading at Yellow Beaches was impracticable due to continuing opposition and machine gun fire ashore, CTF 52 decided to send the LSTs and LCTs inside the lagoon for the night, and retire with the transports to the southeastward, returning at daylight.[39]

Each night from 20 through 23 November, at approximately 1800, the transports and their escorts retired well to sea and returned to the Transport Area the next morning at approximately sunrise. During the long hours of the night, the LSTs, LCTs, and the Shore Party attempted to reduce the clutter on the landing beaches and get ready for a full day's work on the morrow.

[39] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, GALVANIC Report, pp. 18–19.



Butaritari Island—Sketch Plan of Yellow Beach Two.

Not only were the Red beaches unsuitable, but Yellow Beach Two in the lagoon was no bargain beach, since the coral reef off of it was about 200 yards wide. One ship reported:

> This coral reef was never dry. It had from 12–18″ of water over it even at low tide. At high tide, the water was never deep enough to allow boats to get into the beach over this coral reef. At no time could boats be unloaded on dry land. . . .[40]

This condition had been anticipated in part by Rear Admiral Turner, who had written to Major General Ralph Smith:

> Attention is invited to the fact that shortly after W-Hour, conditions for landing will be at their worst as boats will be unable to beach and the reef will not have dried sufficiently to permit ready handling from the edge of the reef to the shore.[41]

The reef condition necessitated the use of LVTs as the sole vehicle for the actual final unloading onto Yellow Beach Two and brought complications with the troops, for:

[40] *Neville,* GALVANIC Report, p. 11.

[41] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to COMGEN 27th Division, Ser C5A/21/00125 of 29 Oct. 1943.

> At one time all LVTs were used by the Army and during this time, *no* boats were unloaded.[12]

At the end of Dog Day, the transports averaged only 25 percent unloaded, with some of this 25 percent still in the landing craft and not ashore. With only daylight to unload in, it was apparent that the large transports were going to have to be around for some days longer. Fortunately, no enemy air or surface craft had shown up to be engaged by TF 52 on that day and about half of Butaritari Island had been seized. The situation was not one to enthuse over but neither was it all bad.

Pontoon causeways were to be set up at all the beaches on Dog Day plus one and it ws hoped that the second day would produce a higher rate of discharge of support logistics. Repair of King's Wharf in the lagoon, which was barely usable initially, was also proceeding rapidly. Since it had a sea-plane ramp at its outer edge, a greater unloading tonnage could be looked forward to confidently.

Upon return to Makin on the morning of Dog Day plus one, the cargo ship *Alcyone* was moved into Makin Lagoon to unload, and the *Leonard Wood* and *Calvert* were directed to unload from positions off Entrance Island (Transport Area Two). Only the transport *Pierce* continued to unload over Red Beach Two. The *Belle Grove* was to spend its energies in repairing disabled landing craft, which were plentiful.

The second night, the *Alcyone, Belle Grove,* as well as the LSTs and LCTs, were left in the lagoon to continue unloading, while the rest of the Task Force cruised to the southeastward of Makin Atoll. Additional pontoon sections were to be set up the next day. The transports were now 60 percent unloaded. Since the Japanese had adequate time to get their submarines to the Gilberts, the submarine worry factor was increasing.

By the late afternoon of the next day, the 22nd, the transports and cargo ship were 94 percent unloaded. One more trek to the southeastward was ordered for that night, before re-embarkation of the assault troops and their equipment scheduled on the afternoon of the morrow.

Transport Division 20 finally got that last six percent cleared out of their holds about 1400 on 23 November. Re-embarkation of assault troops and tanks immediately commenced. This was not completed until late afternoon on 24 November when the larger transports departed for Pearl Harbor under the motherly protection of the unhappy *Mississippi.*

The garrison forces had arrived at Makin at 1100 on 24 November and

[12] *Neville* GALVANIC Report, p. 1-1.

commenced debarkation shortly thereafter. Their logistic support had been unloaded from all ships, less the *SS Constantine,* by 1500, 29 November, although

> much time was lost in unloading since the air alerts [due to radar contacts with aircraft not showing IFF that were later identified as friendly] required all vessels to get underway, prepared to repel air attacks.[43]

GUNFIRE SUPPORT MAKIN ATOLL

The gunfire bombardment went 1, 2, 3, despite many gun casualties, the lack of good charts, many low flying clouds and occasional heavy rain squalls. Some 1,700 tons of shells were fired during the pre-landing bombardment. In the words of the Commander Fire Support:

> Outstanding was the fact that the ship's [gunfire] mission was accomplished precisely according to plan. No deficiency of material or personnel occurred to necessitate any deviation from plan; neither was there any enemy counteraction to upset the plan.[44]
>
> * * * * *
>
> Prearranged fires were delivered as scheduled, commencing at 0640 and continuing until 0825 (when fire ceased for air strike), resuming again at 0850 and continuing until 1025.[45]

The heavy ships bombarded from positions generally south and west of Makin Island in order to take advantage of the greater length of the island versus its breadth. Despite this positioning:

> A large percentage of salvos fired by bombarding ships fell in the water and were ineffective and wasted. This was caused by using indirect fire at assigned targets [while] using navigational fixes obtained from tangents of the islands. These fixes in general were never accurate.[46]

Salvos falling in the water were also caused by firing at unnecessarily long ranges, particularly for the 5-inch batteries of the heavy ships. The *Pennsylvania,* for instance, fired its secondary battery at average ranges of 15,400 yards to 15,800 yards, while its 14-inch main battery was fired only at ranges from 10,100 to 14,200. The average range of the main battery fire

[43] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR GALVANIC Report, Encl. (F), p. 2.

[44] *New Mexico* (BB-40) GALVANIC Report, 24 Nov. 1943, p. 1.

[45] Commander Fire Support Group (52.2) Action Report, Ser. A16–3 (0046) of 14 Dec. 1943, p. 4.

[46] *Baltimore* (CA-68) GALVANIC Report, 20 Nov. 1943, p. 2.

was about 12,000 yards for the larger ships, and about 7,000 yards for the destroyers.[47]

Minneapolis, Dewey, and *Phelps* were told off to furnish close supporting call fires for the troops. Requests for gunfire support were limited to gunfire on the hulks in the lagoon. The designated ships stood by, but no calls came from the regimental or battalion shore fire control parties. Perhaps part of this reluctance by the troop commanders to use naval gunfire was the large clouds of coral dust and debris raised by the gun bombardment, due to the order that

> all 5"/25 caliber projectiles had fuses set so as to burst on impact.[48]

The rapid salvos of the cruisers and destroyers firing their guns obscured a fair share of the island and prevented the troop commanders from observing the accuracy of the shooting.

AIR BOMBARDMENT AND CLOSE AIR SUPPORT

> The assigned targets on the island were bombed and strafed, but it is impossible to assess total damage resulting since strikes had been made previously by planes from the other carriers. . . .
>
> * * * * *
>
> Due to minute [target] areas, and nature of target objectives, and to speed, angle of dive and sharp pull up and break away tactics used in strafing runs, minute observations of results were not possible, but tracer bullets were seen by all pilots to strike or enter targets and target areas.
>
> * * * * *
>
> The Support Air Commander returned two support air groups without having dropped their bombs.[49]

Despite the availability of close air support in generous quantity, no calls for it were made by the Landing Force subsequent to the unsuccessful bombing attacks on the lagoon hulks on Dog Day.

THE FOLLOW-UP

Out of the experience of Guadalcanal and New Georgia had come a

[47] *New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Idaho, Baltimore, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Dewey, MacDonough, Phelps, Gridley,* GALVANIC Reports.

[48] CTF 52 Op Order A3–43, 23 Oct. 1943.

[49] (a) *Belleau Wood* (CVL-24) GALVANIC Report, 3 Dec. 1943, p. 1; (b) *Monterey* (CV-26) Report, 11 Dec. 1943, p. 4; (c) Commander Task Group 50.2 Report, 23 Dec. 1943.

strong conviction that the garrison troops and their logistic support must be firmly scheduled to arrive and replace the assault troops and their equipment as soon as practicable after the objectives were secured by the assault troops.

The problem that this conviction created for GALVANIC arose from the lack of suitable naval transports and naval cargo ships to carry the "follow up," not from the lack of garrison troops or logistic support.

The ships that were assembled for this "follow-up" chore were a pretty miscellaneous lot, but the hurriedly assembled staff of Commander Garrison Group was even more miscellaneous and a travesty on naval staffs. The staff totaled five officers, four of whom had had no experience at sea and three of whom had had no naval experience or training in their specialty assignments.[50]

The Makin and Tarawa Garrison Groups (Task Groups 54.8 and 54.9) under the command of Captain Paul P. Blackburn, U. S. Navy, (Retired), departed Pearl Harbor on November 15th with three naval oilers in company. The Garrison Groups proceeded at a 12-knot speed of advance with a due date in the Gilberts of Dog Day plus four.

Besides the three oilers, this task group included one new naval transport, one naval cargo ship, and seven merchant ships. There were six new destroyer escorts to guide and protect them. When west of Baker Island, an Air Support Group joined up.

Communications were a major problem:

> In this case, since the TBY [voice radio] was out of commission, colored lights and radio forbidden, nothing remained but whistle signals for night maneuvering of a task group which had never operated independently. . . .[51]

Naval ships and merchant ships, of necessity, were in the same column of a four-column formation. The naval ships were not accustomed to merchant ship maneuvering nor to the split command responsibility between escort and convoy commanders. The marked limitations of merchant ships to maneuver when in formation were not well understood by the escort commander.[52]

It is a tribute to the Task Group Commander and to the merchant marine that the Task Group arrived on time on 24 November, even though:

> One vessel, the *Cape Constantine,* a motor ship, was a problem during the

[50] CTG 54.8 GALVANIC Report, 7 Dec. 1943.

[51] Commander Task Group 54.9 GALVANIC Report, 15 Dec. 1943, p. 1.

[52] CTG 54.8 Operation Order 1–43; Movement Orders 1–43, 2–43; GALVANIC Report, 7 Dec. 1943

> outward voyage. Shortly after departure from Pearl, the *Cape Constantine* began dropping astern. The Master reported to me that his best speed was 11.5 knots and that he was having no mechanical difficulties. The ship was permitted to steam steadily on the base course without zigzag, causing some interference with the maneuvers of the escort vessels and leaving *Cape Constantine* at times considerably astern of the convoy and its escort. I increased the speed of the convoy from time to time by increments of one half knot until the speed made good was about 12 25 knots. *Cape Constantine* was able to keep up, so I'm not sure that the difficulty was not partly 'Chief Engineer trouble.' [53]

Despite air alarms sending the crews to general quarters five to eight times a day, the LSTs had largely completed unloading the merchant transports carrying the equipment and logistic support for the garrison troops at Makin by 29 November and gladly saw them depart the next day.[54]

That was a major improvement over the WATCHTOWER experience.

JAPANESE AIR ATTACKS DURING ASSAULT PHASE

On Dog Day, sixteen torpedo bombers from Kwajalein and Maloelap Atolls in the Marshall Islands had passed clear of TF 52 at Makin Atoll to the westward and swept down on the Southern Carrier Group (Task Group 50.3) as the carriers were recovering aircraft just before sunset (1819) off Tarawa. Despite an early warning of the impending attack by an anti-submarine patrol aircraft and by the destroyer *Kidd* (DD-661), plentiful anti-aircraft fire and the efforts of the limited number of fighters still aloft, a torpedo was placed in the bowels of the cruiser-hulled carrier, *Independence* (CVL-1). This was the only major casualty to our air support from the Japanese air arm during the first four days of GALVANIC, although several enemy air groups of good size had sought dawn or dusk contact on the 18th and 19th of November, before the Assault Force reached the Gilberts. Two major Japanese air attacks were turned back by the *Lexington* (CV-16) on 23 and 24 November, well clear of the air support carrier groups.[55]

The amphibians at Makin Atoll had the usual rash of bogies each day but mostly they turned out to be friendly planes who were reluctant dragons in turning on the IFF (Identification Friend, Foe) signals. No Japanese air

[53] CTG 54.8 GALVANIC Report, 7 Dec. 1943, p. 2.

[54] LSTGRP Eight War Diary.

[55] (a) CTF 50 GALVANIC Report, 16 Dec. 1943; (b) CTG 50.3, *Kidd* (DD-661), *Hale* (DD-642), *Pensacola* (CA-24), *Salt Lake City* (CA-25), GALVANIC Reports.

attack was logged by any ship of the Northern Attack Force until 25 November, when there was a crescendo of air attacks on all Fifth Fleet Forces in the area of the Gilbert Islands.

JAPANESE AIR ATTACK DURING "FOLLOW-UP" PHASE

Rear Admiral Turner described vividly one pass at the Northern Attack Force by Japanese aviators occurring on 25 November:

> 1500 to 1800 Several single BOGIES were reported generally to the north and northwest, distance 12 to 20 miles, all reported low. Fighters were vectored out on several occasions, but failed to make contact. It is believed that the BOGIES were Japanese BETTY's reporting position of and tracking this force.
>
> 1751 Recovery of our combat air patrol completed.
>
> 1810 Sunset. Radar contact with one enemy aircraft.
>
> 1825 Visual contact with one BETTY.
>
> 1832 Formed modified cruising disposition 3L2; battleships moving in to 1500 yards and two flanking destroyers dropping back to the rear of the disposition, all destroyers closing to 1,500 yards from the nearest heavy ship.
>
> 1838 Planes closing from various directions simultaneously dropping flares and float lights. CTF 52 reported that TF 52 was under enemy air attack. Float lights were dropped on both beams so that disposition was outlined along the direction of movement. These float lights burn an hour or more.
>
> 1841 Directed all ships to open fire if target closed within 4,000 yards and a good solution was obtained. CTF 52 maneuvered disposition by radical emergency turn signals to confuse enemy pilots and dodge attack. . . . Several enemy planes were taken under fire at distances of 2–3 thousand yards by several ships. Ship ceased fire promptly when planes withdrew and fire discipline was excellent. Maneuvering was continuous until 2015 when all planes finally withdrew.[56]

In the disposition were three battleships, two jeep carriers, two heavy cruisers, and seven destroyers. Rear Admiral Turner went on to note:

> A total of 20 emergency turns were made in 76 minutes. . . . One turn of 180° was made, two of 120° and three of 90°. . . . Similar night precision [in tight maneuvering] had previously been observed when there were 39 vessels in the disposition.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Difficult as it is to believe, the enemy planes definitely maintain rather close

[56] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR GALVANIC Report, pp. 37–38.

formations on very black nights. . . . If we could discover their secret (assuming they have one) our night fighters would have a Roman holiday.[57]

An historian's eye witness contemporary account of this Japanese air attack read:

In the night, as we were approaching the rendezvous, we were subjected to an air attack. It was preceded by a line of float lights being dropped by the enemy planes—a line of about ten of them—which blinked regularly on the horizon and were evidently intended to indicate to other planes the direction in which the task force was steering. They were followed by the dropping of parachute flares which came down very slowly. We admired the way the officer in tactical command, Rear Admiral Turner, managed his task group. Waiting until the parachute flares were about halfway down, in a position where they illuminated the ships most effectively, he ordered an emergency turn away from them, so that we would be illuminated as little as possible. And this procedure was repeated, so that in an hour and a quarter, we made something like thirty emergency turns. The enemy planes appeared to be bewildered—they came in singly and by two's and three's—and it was evident that many of them could not find us.[58]

This incident was observed by many. General Hogaboom who was a member of the FIFTHPHIBFOR Staff records it as follows:

Admiral Turner took his place out on the darkened Flag Bridge and maneuvered the Fleet through rapid changes of course. Radar bearings were called to him. He personally read the polaris and called the changes of course. It was closing on toward midnight when the planes finally disappeared from the screen and secure from GQ was sounded.

Then, after being up since before dawn and having been engaged in operations throughout the day and after a couple of hours of exhausting concentration on the maneuvers of the Fleet, he went immediately into the Flag Plot and sending for his yeoman, started a lengthy and detailed dictation of his concept of the next amphibious operation into the Marshalls. He then turned in, and a couple of hours later, prior to dawn GQ, I found him with a red pencil running through the yeoman's rough draft of his dictation.[59]

LISCOME BAY

One of the assumptions in COMCENPACFOR's Plan for GALVANIC was:

that enemy submarines in strength will attack our surface forces in the vicinity

[57] CTF 52 Report of Air Attack on TF 52, Ser 00166 of 4 Dec. 1943, pp. 3, 4.
[58] Morison Narrative, 15 Dec. 1943. Operational Sound Recording OFR-36.
[59] Interview with General Robert E. Hogaboom, USMC (Ret.), 15 May 1967.

> of the objectives, and enemy submarines may operate along our line of communications.[60]

This assumption turned out to hit the bull's eye.

According to the basic TF 52 and TF 54 GALVANIC plans, Carrier Division 24, with three jeep carriers, together with the gunfire support battleships and heavy cruisers, regularly provided planes for the dawn to dusk anti-submarine air search and patrol around Task Force 52. Beginning with 22 November, this search was augmented by a six-plane hunter-killer group from the Southern Carrier Group specially requested by Rear Admiral Turner because of a despatch from CINCPAC indicating that from intelligence sources, it had been learned the Japanese were moving additional submarines into the Gilberts area.[61]

The *Essex* and *Independence* both had reported sighting a submarine between 1626 and 1650, on 20 November.

At 1214 on the 22nd of November, the destroyer *Burns* (DD-588) screening the *Minneapolis* and other heavy ships off Makin belatedly reported having had a sound contact at 1115. Later that day, when screening the jeep carriers of Task Force 52, the *Burns* reported a good submarine contact just at sundown. She was directed to search for it all night.

Early on the morning of the 23rd, the *Idaho* (BB-42) reported a periscope sighted at 5,000 yards. At 1805 that day the *Mustin* (DD-341) made a depth charge attack on a sound contact. All anti-submarine efforts against these contacts seemingly were fruitless, as was the *Kimberly's* search following a sound contact at 0514 and a 0534 depth charge attack on the morning of the 24th.

On 24 November, at 0516, Rear Admiral Turner logged:

> Large explosion and resulting fire was observed bearing 273° [true] distance about 15 miles.[62]

This entry related to the merchant-hulled carrier (CVE) *Liscome Bay* which was the victim of the I-175. The I-175 had the good luck to be in the path of the three jeep carrier Task Group (TG 52.3) under the escort of only four destroyers. One of these destroyers had been sent off to investigate a float light dropped by a Japanese aircraft—further lessening the effectiveness of the anti-submarine screen. Even better luck for the submarine came when the task group turned into the wind for the morning launch of

[60] COMCENPACFOR, Op Plan CEN 1–43, 25 Oct. 1943, para. 1(b)(5).
[61] CINCPAC to COMCENPACFOR, 212225 Nov. 1943.
[62] CTF 52 GALVANIC Report, 4 Dec. 1943, p. 33.

aircraft at the precise moment for a successful torpedo attack. Rear Admiral Griffin recorded the results:

> Sparks and burning debris fell on the *New Mexico* (1500 yards away) and in *Maury* (5000 yards away from *Liscome Bay*). . . . At 0535 she sank by the stern.[63]

Rear Admiral Henry M. Mullinnix, Commander Air Support Group, number one man in the Class of 1916, and 643 others including the skipper, Captain I. D. Wiltsie, were lost out of 959 personnel aboard the *Liscome Bay*. There were no survivors from aft of frame 112.

At 0524, the destroyer *Kimberly* in the screen for the heavy ships 15 miles away from the *Liscome Bay* reported a sound contact and at 0534 made a depth charge attack. Unfortunately, she did not bring up the I-175.

Immediate post-war interrogation of Japanese officers and later Japanese popular written accounts of the Gilbert Island operation indicate that no less than six and most probably nine submarines were ordered to the Gilbert Islands area at top speed to attack our GALVANIC forces. One Japanese source says only three of these nine submarines returned. But I-175 returned to Kwajalein to enjoy its glory until her end came in 1944.

Specifically, Japanese submarines which were already withdrawing from general patrol areas on our much used line of communication from Pearl Harbor to Australia, were ordered to the Gilberts. The I-175 was among this group. Others known were I-35, I-39, and I-119. The I-35 was sunk on 22 November in the Gilberts by destroyers *Frazier* (DD-607) and *Meade* (DD-602) of the anti-submarine screen of the Fire Support Group of the Southern Attack Force.

The I-19 which left Truk for the Gilberts on 22 November never was heard from again. Perhaps she was sunk by the *Cotten* (DD-669) who made a good depth charge attack on the 24th, and blew up pieces of wood.

The I-40 was sunk by the destroyer *Radford* (DD-446) of the Northern Carrier Group (TG 50.2) on 25 November. The RO-38, ordered into the Gilberts, never returned. The I-174, one of four submarines ordered up from the New Guinea Area, was damaged on 26 November perhaps by eight planes of the Relief Carrier Group that made strafing runs on a surfaced submarine in the process of diving on 29 November. How many of this group from the New Guinea Area arrived in the Gilberts is not known.

The point is obvious that the longer the amphibious assault phase lasts, the

[63] CTG 52.13 (Rear Admiral R. M. Griffin), Report of Loss of *USS Liscome Bay*, Ser 0034 of 11 Dec. 1943.

greater the risk to the assaulting ships, as additional submarines come on the line.[64]

The rapid sinking of the *Liscome Bay* was upsetting to those who took the jeep carriers (CVEs) into battle zones. There had been much adverse comment on the below water line design of these jeep carriers. In the interests of saving time and money in their building from an already existing below the water line merchant ship design—no adequate effort had been made to rearrange gasoline stowage and bomb stowage to gain additional protection from torpedo hits within a merchant ship's hull. The operating Navy had been overruled by its civilian superiors, when it protested this crash construction procedure.

The Board of Investigation, convened to inquire into the rapid disintegration and sinking of the *Liscome Bay,* decided that the tremendous explosion was caused by the torpedo hit being so positioned that it caused an instantaneous explosion of the *Liscome Bay's* own bombs in their outside stowage compartments. These compartments were not provided with a modicum of protection by having fuel tanks located outboard of them, as were all Navy designed merchant hull-type ships. The Board also stated that there was no inherent structural weakness in the ship.[65]

Survivors and shipmates wrote:

> Doors and hatches are so located, that in Condition ABLE, personnel below decks have little chance to make a quick exit. This is most injurious to morale.
>
> * * * * *
>
> The employment of light sheet metal bulkheads and extremely thin decks tends to add to the extreme vulnerability of this class vessel.[66]

The sinking of the *Liscome Bay* made it crystal clear, as the Army History of GALVANIC says:

> Had the capture of Makin been conducted more expeditiously, she [*Liscome Bay*] would have departed the danger area before 24 November, the morning of the disaster.[67]

COMMAND—MAKIN

There was no "command problem" at Makin, as there had been at Guadalcanal and at New Georgia.

[64] (a) USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Vol. I, p. 143; (b) Mochitsura Hashimoto, *Sunk,* pp. 153–54.

[65] COMINCH, Loss of *USS Liscome Bay,* Ser 002903 30 Dec. 1943.

[66] COMCARDIV 24 (CO *Corregidor*) Action Report, Ser 001 of 5 Dec. 1943, p. 2 and encl. (C).

[67] Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls* (Army), p. 126

Commanding General 27th Division reported ready and assumed command ashore on November 22nd at 1510. Commander Garrison Forces, Colonel Clesen H. Tenney, AUS, assumed command of Makin Atoll at 0800 on 24 November, after receipt (on the afternoon of the 23rd) of a recommendation by Commander Central Pacific Forces from the Commanding General 27th Division, that this be done.

The senior Marine officer on Rear Admiral Turner's Staff at Makin stated in regard to the Admiral:

> His exercise of command was personal and direct, as he extended it through every echelon down to all levels. He prepared his orders in minute detail. On D-Day with ships and craft of every type and size in the Transport Area, he knew where each should be and when—and he did not hesitate to heap abuse on any skipper who was slow or timid [moving] into position. . . .
>
> On the morning of D-Day (19 November) as we proceeded with the preliminary bombardment of Makin, a Japanese cargo ship in the lagoon got underway and a cruiser at some distance took her under fire. Admiral Turner quickly noted the cruiser was neither closing the range nor getting a hit, so in great anger, he signalled, 'Close the range and sink her or cease fire'.[68]

MAKIN SUMMARY

The Makin Atoll landing was the first large landing of the Central Pacific campaign by Army troops. The Navy was anxious to do its part of the job right.

But the Red beaches chosen by the Army in their Scheme of Maneuver and agreed to by the Navy as hydrographically acceptable turned out to be beaches whose approaches were filled with coral rocks.

As the Army history correctly records:

> Except for initial difficulties in getting the troops ashore against natural rather than man-made obstacles, the landing had been a pushover.[69]

Admiral Turner said:

> My poorest appraisal of beach areas for a landing during the whole war was at Makin. It convinced me that we had to have somebody actually walk over the beach approaches and walk up to the beaches before we scheduled landings on them. Air reconnaissance is wonderful, but it wasn't good enough at Makin to provide adequate information in regard to the beaches or the beach approaches. The Red beaches were just plain stinko profundo. That's why I pushed the development of Underwater Demolition Teams so hard.[70]

[68] Hogaboom.

[69] Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls*, p. 82.

[70] Turner.

When all was said and done, the assault on Makin from the naval point of view had been difficult and irksome because of miserable beaches and makeshift unloading. It had been saddened by the unusually large loss of life in the sinking of the *Liscome Bay* and the explosion in the turret of the *Mississippi.*

From the Army Landing Force point of view:

> General Holland Smith was later of the opinion that the capture of Makin was 'infuriatingly slow.' Considering the size of the atoll, the nature of the enemy's defenses, and the great superiority of force enjoyed by the attacking troops, his criticism seems justified. It is all the more so when to the cost of tardiness is added the loss of a valuable escort aircraft carrier with more than half the hands aboard.[71]

[71] Crowl and Love, p 126.

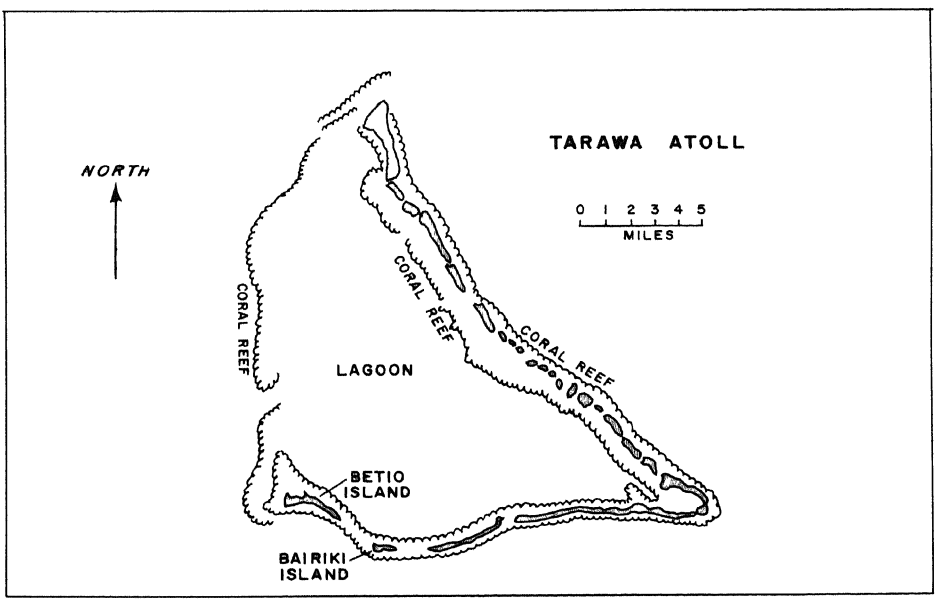
CHAPTER XVIII

That Real Toughie—Tarawa

TARAWA ATOLL

Tarawa Atoll was quite another matter from Makin Atoll. Both were victories, but Tarawa was a tremendous victory. Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill was the Task Force Commander at Tarawa. The detailed naval planning was his, including the naval chores in the gunfire plans and the landing plans. His was the responsibility for establishing the Landing Force on shore. This he did.

Rear Admiral Turner, the Task Force Commander and Immediate Senior in Command, was well over the horizon and busy with the problems of



Tarawa Atoll.

Makin. Vice Admiral Spruance, the Commander Central Pacific Force, was present at Tarawa in the *Indianapolis* (CA-35), but with that quality which endeared him to all his subordinates, did not undertake to kibitz on the minute-by-minute performance of the local Task Force or Task Group Commanders.

To Rear Admiral Harry Hill belongs full credit for a great and hard-fought victory.

Despite the tremendous victory, there were some caustic comments and a few old shoes thrown about. Some of these were directed at Rear Admiral Turner, and a few at Vice Admiral Spruance. As at Guadalcanal, Rear Admiral Turner accepted his responsibilities for the decisions that were his as the Task Force Commander and Immediate Senior in Command. He suggested that the facts be laid on the table and examined.

Without in any way attempting to describe all the naval operations at Tarawa, this will be done.

REAR ADMIRAL HARRY W. HILL GETS A NEW JOB

The first secret letter which Rear Admiral Turner had written after he undertook the duties of Commander Fifth Amphibious Force was to recommend to CINCPAC that a Flag officer be ordered to command the Naval Attack Force which would assemble, plan and train for the GALVANIC operation in New Zealand where the Second Marine Division was located. Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill was the officer chosen for this assignment by Admiral King. He became Commander TF 53, the Southern Attack Force. Like nearly all the other Flag officers moving into amphibious commands at this stage of the war, this officer was commanding his first amphibious assault force.[1]

The Southern Attack Force (TF 53) of necessity was markedly larger in transport strength than the Northern Attack Force (TF 52) because its task was to land a division, while TF 52 was to land only a regiment or one-third of a division. At the same time, the combined gunfire and air power of TF 53 and its nearby Southern Carrier Group, in comparison with TF 52 and the Northern Carrier Group, did not reflect the known strong Japanese defenses on Betio Island of Tarawa Atoll versus the known modest Japanese defenses on Butaritari Island of Makin Atoll. This imbalance in total gunfire

[1] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to CINCPAC, letter, P14/Ser 001 of 4 Sep. 1943.

and air power readily available to CTF 53 was decided on by Commander Central Pacific Force because of a belief that an attack by the Japanese Fleet would come in from the north or northwest—the directions of the Marshalls and of Truk—and that adequate battle line strength and air power to meet any aspect of such an attack should be deployed in that direction, and included in the Northern Attack Force.

Comparative strength of the two task forces follow:

	(Northern) *TF 52*	(Southern) *TF 53*
Attack transports	4	12
Transports	0	1
Attack Cargo Ships	1	3
LSTs	3	3
LSD	1	1
Destroyers, transport screen	4	8
Battleships (OBB)	4	3
Cruisers, heavy	4	2
Cruisers, light	0	2
Destroyers, fire support screen	6	9
Minesweepers	1	2
Carriers, Jeep (CVE)	3	5
Destroyers, air support screen	4	5
	35	56

TF 53 was organized as follows:

SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE—TASK FORCE 53

Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill (1911)

(a) *TASK GROUP 53.1 TRANSPORT GROUP* Captain Herbert B. Knowles (1917)

TASK UNIT 53.1.1 TRANSPORT DIVISION FOUR Captain John B. McGovern (1921)

Zeilin (FF) (APA-3) Commander Thomas B. Fitzpatrick (1919)

Harry Lee (APA-10) Commander Joseph G. Pomeroy (1921)

William P. Biddle (APA-8) Commander Leon F. Brown, USNR (1916)

Arthur Middleton (APA-25) Captain S. A. Olsen, USCG

Heywood (APA-6) Commander Paul F. Dugan (1923)

Thuban (AKA-19) Commander James C. Campbell, USNR

TASK UNIT 53.1.2 TRANSPORT DIVISION EIGHTEEN Captain H. B. Knowles (1917)

Monrovia (F) (APA-31) Commander John D. Kelsey (1923)
Doyen (APA-1) Commander John G. McClaughry (1927)
Ashland (LSD-1) Captain Clarence L. C. Atkeson (1922)
Sheridan (APA-51) Commander John J. Mockrish, USNR
Virgo (AKA-20) Commander Claton H. McLaughlin, USNR
LaSalle (AP-102) Commander Fred C. Fluegel, USNR

TASK UNIT 53.1.3 TRANSPORT DIVISION SIX Captain Thomas B. Brittain (1920)

Harris (F) (APA-2) Commander A. M. Van Eaton (1921)
J. Franklin Bell (APA-16) Captain Oliver H. Ritchie, USNR
Ormsby (APA-49) Commander Leonard Frisco, USNR
Feland (APA-11) Captain Clinton A. Misson (1921)
Bellatrix (AKA-3) Commander Charles A. Joans, USNR

TASK UNIT 53.1.4 TRANSPORT SCREEN Captain Edward M. Thompson (1921)

John Rodgers (F) (DD-574) Commander Herman O. Parish (1926)
Sigsbee (DD-502) Commander B. V. M. Russell (1926)
Heermann (DD-532) Commander Dwight M. Agnew (1925)
Hazelwood (DD-531) Commander Hunter Wood, Jr. (1925)
Harrison (DD-573) Commander Carl M. Dalton (1927)
McKee (DD-575) Commander John J. Greytak (1926)
Murray (DD-576) Commander Paul R. Anderson (1928)

(b) *TASK GROUP 53.2 MINESWEEPER GROUP* Lieutenant Commander H. R. Peirce USNR

Requisite (F) (AM-109) Lieut. Comdr. Herbert R. Peirce, USNR
Pursuit (AM-108) Lieutenant Romer F. Good, USNR

(c) *TASK GROUP 53.3 LST GROUP* Lieut. Comdr. Ray M. Pitts (1932)

LST-242 Lieutenant Justin W. Winney, USNR
LST-243 Lieutenant Floyd H. Blaske, USNR
LST-34 Lieutenant (jg) James J. Davis Jr., USNR
LCT-247
LCT-250 Ensign Gordon S. Foster, USNR
LCT-251 Ensign Roland W. Holmes, USNR
Bancroft (DD-598) Lieut. Comdr. Ray M. Pitts (1932)

(d) *TASK GROUP 53.4 FIRE SUPPORT GROUP* Rear Admiral H. F. Kingman (1911)

TASK UNIT 53.4.1 FIRE SUPPORT SECTION 1 Rear Admiral Howard F. Kingman (1911)

Tennessee (F) (BB-43) Captain Robert S. Haggart (1912)
Mobile (CL-63) Captain C. Julian Wheeler (1916)

Bailey (DD-492) Lieut. Comdr. Malcolm T. Munger (1932)
Frazier (DD-607) Lieut. Comdr. Elliott M. Brown (1931)

TASK UNIT 53.4.2. FIRE SUPPORT SECTION TWO Rear Admiral Lawrence T. Dubose (1913)

Maryland (FF) (BB-46) Captain Carl H. Jones (1914)
Santa Fe (CL-60) Captain Robert S. Berkey (1916)
Gansevoort (DD-608) Lieut. Comdr. John M. Steinbeck (1933)
Meade (DD-602) Lieut. Comdr. John Munholland (1932)

TASK UNIT 53.4.3 FIRE SUPPORT SECTION THREE Captain William Granat (1915)

Colorado (BB-45) Captain William Granat (1915)
Portland (CA-33) Captain Arthur D. Burhans (1916)
Anderson (DD-411) Lieut. Comdr. John G. Tennent, III (1932)
Russell (DD-414) Lieut. Comdr. Warren H. McClain (1930)

TASK UNIT 53.4.4 FIRE SUPPORT SECTION FOUR Commander Henry Crommelin (1925)

Ringgold (DD-500) Commander Thomas F. Conley, Jr. (1926)
Dashiell (DD-659) Commander John B. McLean (1926)

TASK UNIT 53.4.5 FIRE SUPPORT SECTION FIVE Captain Einar R. Johnson (1918)

Indianapolis (FF) (CA-35) Captain Einar R. Johnson (1918)
Schroeder (DD-501) Lieut. Comdr. John T. Bowers, Jr. (1928)

(e) *TASK GROUP 53.5 SOUTHERN LANDING FORCE* Major General Julian C. Smith, USMC

Embarked Units of
Second Marine Division Major General Julian C. Smith, USMC

(f) *TASK GROUP 53.6 CARRIER (SUPPORT) GROUP* Rear Admiral Van H. Ragsdale (1916)

(Escort Carrier Division 22)
Sangamon (F) (CVE-26) Captain Edward P. Moore (1921)
Suwannee (CVE-27) Captain Frederick W. McMahon (1920)
Chenango (CVE-28) Captain Dixwell Ketcham (1920)
Barnes (CVE-20) Captain George A. Dussault (1923)
Nassau (CVE-16) Captain Stanley J. Michael (1920)

TASK UNIT 53.6.2 SCREEN (DESTROYER DIVISION TWO) Commander Ira H. Nunn (1924)

Farragut (F) (DD-348) Lieut. Comdr. Edward F. Ferguson (1931)
Alwyn (DD-355) Commander Robert O. Strange (1928)
Monaghan (DD-354) Lieut. Comdr. Peter H. Horn (1930)
Cotten (DD-669) Lieut. Comdr. Frank T. Sloat (1930)
Cowell (DD-547) Comdr. Charles W. Parker (1927)

Note (1) Year dates indicate USNA graduation year or year of first permanent USN commission.

Note (2) Commanding Officers as of date of sailing for the operation.
Note (3) Name of Officer in Charge LCT-247 not available in the records.

Three days before the assault at Tarawa commenced, Kelly Turner sent a letter by destroyer seamail to his old friend Harry Hill:

> I'm not going to interfere with you, but will help in any way possible, if you will keep me advised.[2]

According to Admiral Hill, this understanding for GALVANIC was observed.[3]

The only major command decision reserved to higher authority and likely to arise in the Southern Attack Force related to the commitment of the Corps Reserve. The Corps Reserve was held available for use either at Makin, or Tarawa, or for the subsequent occupation of Apamama. By the written operation orders a recommendation for its release and commitment had to be referred for decision by the Commander Southern Landing Force to the Commander Southern Attack Force, and by him to Commander Fifth Amphibious Corps and to Commander Assault Force.

Covering this matter, as well as the pre-landing bombardments, Rear Admiral Turner wrote to his senior naval amphibious subordinate as follows:

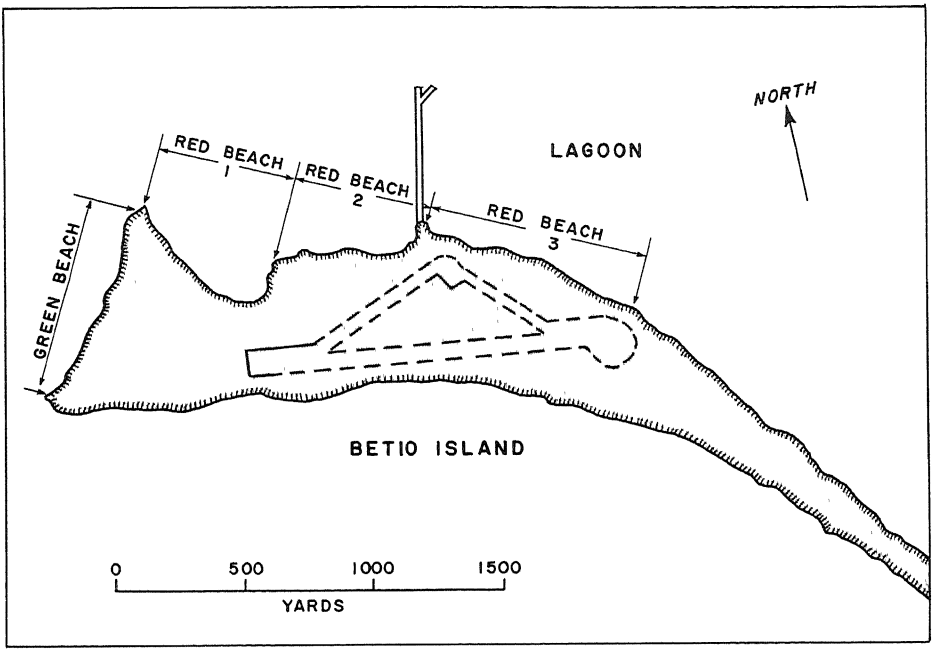
> Both Holland Smith and I feel that the scheduled advance bombing and bombardment, and the maximum amount of effective bombing and bombardment on Dog Day, must be relied on to break down strong resistance, if we are to be successful in getting a secure beachhead. . . .
>
> We also feel that, while the Corps Reserve should not be committed unnecessarily, you should not hesitate to request its assignment to you if you consider there is any real chance of failure without it.[4]

NAVAL OPERATIONAL ASPECTS

There will be no effort to detail herein the shoreside action of the Southern Landing Force at Betio Island. It is one of the fine sagas of the United States Marine Corps. And Admiral Turner always touched his cap to the Marine Corps.

There were a number of naval aspects of the assault landing which were criticized. The operational occurrences relating to the more important of these will be related, without making any effort to detail in full all the naval

[2] RKT to HWH, letter, 17 Nov. 1943.
[3] Interview with Admiral H. W. Hill USN (Ret.), 16 Dec. 1965. Hereafter Hill.
[4] RKT to HWH, letter, 17 Nov. 1943.



Betio Island, Tarawa Atoll.

operational events of the Tarawa victory. Specifically, the faulted aspects included:

1. Delay in landing the three assault waves of amtracs.
2. Pre-landing gunfire bombardment.
3. Pre-landing air bombardment.
4. The timing of the air and gun bombardments with the actual touchdown of the amtracs at the beach.
5. Lack of adequate water over the apron reef for the LCM and LCVP to unload their tanks and troops reasonably close to the beach.

Except for item (1) above, the operation orders which Rear Admiral Turner, as Commander Assault Force, issued to Commander Southern Attack Force had a bearing on the decisions which Rear Admiral Hill, the Commander Southern Attack Force, could make in these areas. To understand these better, the following background is essential.

SCHEME OF MANEUVER—TARAWA ATOLL

The Scheme of Maneuver at Tarawa called for the landing of three battalion landing teams abreast on Red Beach One, Two and Three, on the

lagoon shore of Betio Island with subsequent landings on Betio or adjacent islands as found necessary. Three battalion landing teams were held in reserve, one by the regimental commander and two by the divisional commander. Additionally, there was the Corps Reserve, the Marine 6th Regiment.

TIME SCHEDULE

The assault was based on the time schedule shown below. The time of actual events is given by taking a mean of the times reported after the action by various participants or observers.

Planned	*Actual*	*Event*
Counter Battery Fire As Needed	0058	Moonrise—Third quarter moon.
	0507	Shore batteries opened fire against heavy ships.
	0540	Daylight.
	0548	Shore batteries re-opened fire—this time on a few transports.
	0610	Sunrise.
0545	0613	Air bombardment commences. W-Hour minus 30.
0615	0622	W-Hour is completion of initial air attack; commence phase #1 of scheduled gun bombardment. Officially set as 0620 by CTF 53, but actual air bombardment continued until at least 0622 and possibly 0627.
0730	0736	Cease scheduled gunfire Phase #1. W-Hour plus 75. Fire support ships fire at targets of opportunity while shifting positions for Phase #2 of scheduled gunfire, and continue counter battery fire.

Initially Planned	*Actual*	*Event*
	0741	H-Hour confirmed as 0830.
0745	0745	Commence Phase #2 of scheduled gunfire—beach preparation. (The Plan assumed that coast defense and enemy AA batteries would have been destroyed during Phase #1.)
	0801	H-Hour changed to 0845.
At first 0750 then 0746	0825	Assault waves cross Line of Departure, forty-four minutes' run to Red One beach at four and a half knots speed.

Initially Planned		*Actual*	*Event*
0805		0805	Check gunfire for 5 minutes, silent period.
		0825	H-Hour changed to 0900.
0810 to 0825		0840 to 0855	Beach preparation by ships' gunfire; actual times were based on new H-Hour.
0820		0850	Cease fire all 8″ guns and larger caliber guns.
	Revised H Hour		
0825 to 0830	0855 to 0900	0855 to 0900	Aircraft strafe beaches. No gunfire on beaches.
0830	0900	0910	Land 1st assault wave. (Actual time is for Beach Red One only.)
0830	0900	0917	Aircraft attack secondary defense installations behind beaches.
0833 to 0855	0903 to 0925	0913 to ?	Land 2nd to 6th assault waves. (Actual time is for 2nd wave on Red One only.) Fire support ships maintain neutralization with secondary battery fire.

The pre-battle instructions had two very important provisions:

1. All ships must immediately use counter-battery fire against gun installations which open fire on our surface ships prior to W-30 minutes.
2. Times of ceasing fire given with reference to How Hour are approximate. *The distance of boats from the beach is the governing factor.*[5]

The ships complied when the first contingency arose. The aircraft did not comply with provision (2), looking at their watches instead of the assault boats.

THE APPROACH TO TARAWA

At 0251 on 20 November, the Southern Attack Force, then just south of the mid-latitude between Tarawa Atoll and Maina Atoll, turned to a course of due west and slowed to ten knots as it was experiencing the same strong set by the westerly current as the Northern Attack Force met enroute to Makin Atoll. This set had been reported by the *Nautilus,* the submarine scout. One ship, the *Harris,* logged this current as 1.5 to 2 knots.

[5] Compiled from CTF 54 Op Order A2–43, Annex C. para 3(8); CTF 53 Op Order 104–43 (Revised), 4 Nov. 1943; GALVANIC Reports.

Presumably there were 17–18 miles separating Tarawa and Maina atolls, but the widespread screens were ordered to close in from the flanks in order to narrow the formation front, as existing charts were known to be inaccurate. As Rear Admiral Hill later wrote:

> To get proper fixes from the bearing lines taken by Radar, it was necessary to improvise an approach chart of TARAWA, rotating the compass rose 11° clockwise.[6]

The transports arrived in what they judged to be the Transport Area some eight miles from the northwest corner of Betio Island about 0345 and almost immediately started putting into the water the LVT(1)s for the 1st Assault Wave and getting the troops into them in the pale light of the third-quarter moon. About 0415 the LSTs carrying the LVT(2)s hove into position near the appropriate transports and then began the complicated chore of melding the LVT(2)s with the Marines from the transports.

Dawn was slated to break at 0455 but even before that enlightening event occurred, the transports were carried by the current southerly out of the Transport Area and, at 0421, were ordered by Rear Admiral Hill to get back into proper position.

At 0441 the Japanese fired a red cluster as an official acknowledgement of the presence of Task Force 53.

The transports' troubles due to current and the enemy had just commenced.

THE JAPANESE BECOME ALERT

For the next 26 minutes after firing their red star cluster, the Japanese, being without radar controlled coast defense guns, apparently just peered into the darkness of the night. Finally, at about 0507, a bit over an hour before sunrise, they opened fire with their heavy coast defense guns located at the southwestern end of Betio. These 8-inch guns had been taken out of Singapore after the Japanese captured that port from the British. Cruiser Division Five failed to knock out these guns on the previous day and they provided the first hitch in the scheduled landing operations. Their fire was apparently directed towards the Expeditionary Force in general, rather than any particular ship, since no ship logged a close miss from their big 8-inch shells.

The flagship *Maryland* fired ten salvos from her 16-inch main battery in

[6] CTF 53 GALVANIC Report, 13 Dec. 1943, Encl. (A), p. 7. See also COMCENPAC Op Plan CEN 1–43, 25 Oct. 1943, Annex E, para. 2.

reply, and reported that on the fifth salvo she had scored a hit on the battery as there was an explosion and the Japanese stopped firing. Other heavy support ships opened counter-battery fire at other Japanese guns which had opened up on the Expeditionary Force and continued shooting until about 0542, three minutes before the initial Dog Day air strike was scheduled to start.

Shortly after the fire support ships stopped firing, the Japanese came to life again and about 0550, in the dawn's early light, discovered and started shooting at some of the transports. At this moment the assault transports were debarking the Marines into the LCVPs for the fourth and subsequent assault waves.

By and large, the transports, which were under orders not to reply to enemy gunfire from the shore, did not take much note in their log books of the initial burst of Japanese gunfire about 0507. Some, when they did, assumed they were not the target.[7]

For instance, an old amphibian, the *Harry Lee,* logged at 0510:

> Fire support vessels exchanged shell fire with beach.[8]

During the second burst of Japanese firing commencing about 0550, shells from coast defense guns were logged as falling close aboard the transports *J. Franklin Bell, William P. Biddle, Harris, LaSalle, Monrovia, Virgo* and by LST-34.

This second burst of Japanese shelling three-quarters of an hour after the welcoming salvos officially put the transports in the battle. At 0614, the *LaSalle* (AP-102) logged:

> Many near misses burst near this vessel. One shell burst twenty feet from bow, lightly denting shell plating and spraying personnel with water.[9]

The LST-34, that had brought one-third of the precious new amtracs to Tarawa, logged the following:

> 0612. Enemy shelling from beach by 5" and 6" guns commenced.
> First salvo splashes observed 700 yards off port bow.
> Second salvo splashes observed 300 yards off port beam.
> 0614. Third salvo splashes observed 100 yards off starboard quarter.
> 0615. Fourth salvo 30 yards astern. Underway on evasive courses, speed forced flank.[10]

[7] *Ashland, J. Franklin Bell,* Ships' Logs.
[8] *Harry Lee,* Ship's Log.
[9] *LaSalle,* Ship's Log.
[10] LST-34, Ship's Log.

By and large, the transports continued with their primary task. As their commander reported:

> In spite of this shelling, transports completed disembarking their assault waves, and got underway to northward at 0616 . . . only when enemy shells up to probably 8" size began getting too dangerously close.[11]

Or as another observer, Commander, Transport Division Four, saw it:

> At 0625 transports were under desultory enemy fire from the beach and were obliged to move out of range to a distance of 18,000 yards.[12]

Two men in the *Harris* and one man in the *William P. Biddle* were wounded by shell fragments during this period.

As the initial air strike did not arrive on schedule, and after learning that the air strike would not arrive until about 0610, the heavy support ships opened counter-battery fire again about 0600 and ceased again about 0612. A report stated:

> The actual number of guns on Betio which fired at the transports on the morning of D-day is unknown, but it was estimated that at least two 8" guns and six 5" guns opened fire.[13]

If this observation is at all accurate, it meant that out of four 8-inch guns and eight 5-inch guns on Betio, from 50 percent to 75 percent survived all the pre-Dog Day air bombardments as well as the single pre-Dog Day ship gun bombardment. It was indicative that both the prior air and long-range ship gun bombardment had been of limited value.

LANDING THE ASSAULT WAVES—TARAWA ATOLL

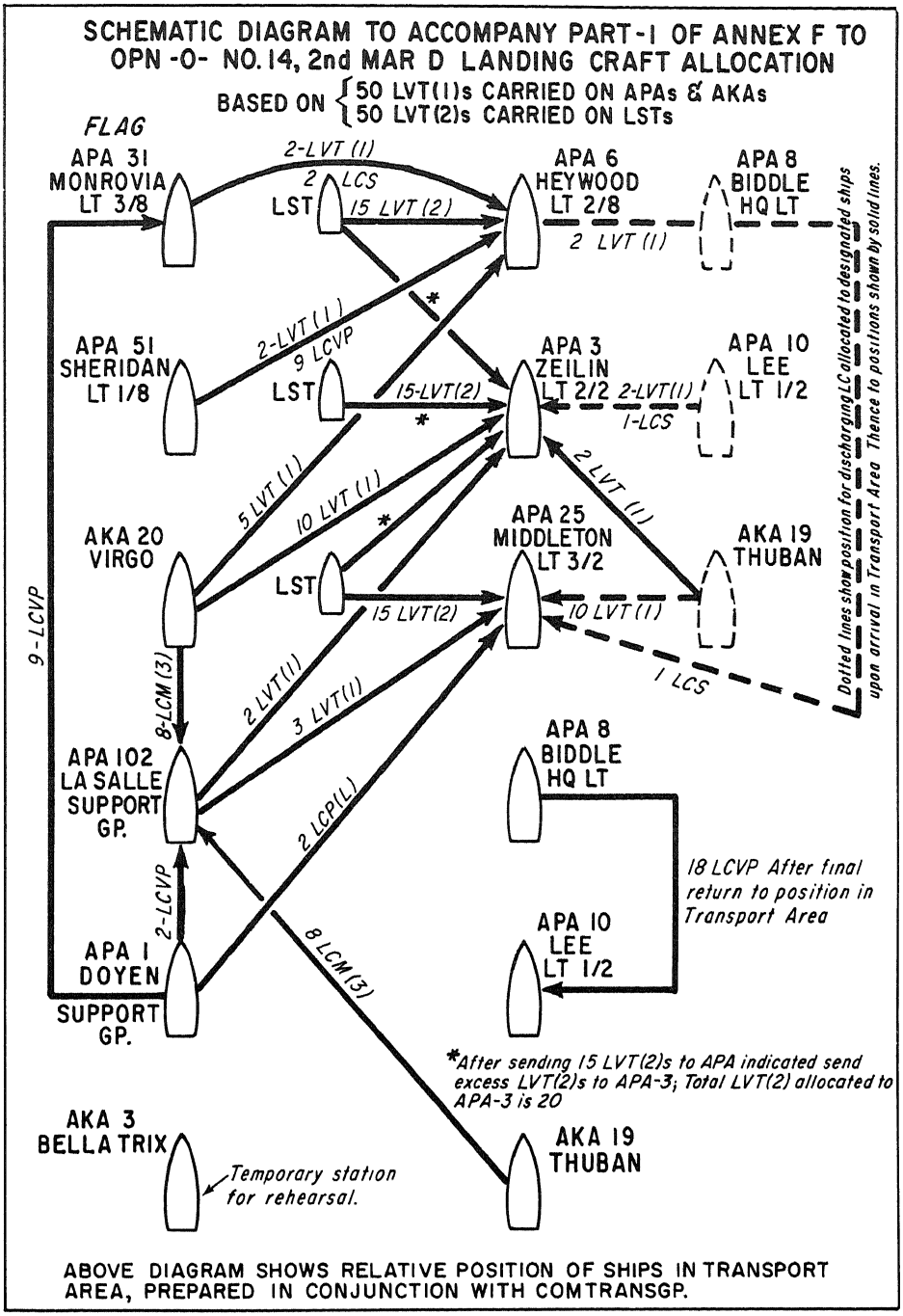
The Scheme of Maneuver for the landing of the assault waves at Betio Island in Tarawa Atoll brought forth the most comprehensive landing attack orders promulgated up to that date in the Pacific amphibious campaigns.

The Operation Order of Commander Transport Group, Southern Attack Force ran to 33 pages. It contained three pages of hand-colored "sectional sketches of the weather reef and beaches showing landing conditions at spring neap tides" as anticipated on 20 November 1943. These sketches indicated the beaches were marginal for regular LCVP landing craft use.

[11] CTF 53.1, GALVANIC Report, 1 Dec. 1943, p. 1.

[12] COMTRANSDIV Four, GALVANIC Report, Ser 004 of 4 Dec. 1943, p. 1.

[13] COMFIFTHPHIBFORPAC, Extracts from Observers' Comments on GALVANIC Operation, 23 Dec. 1943, p. 1.



Landing craft allocation for troop loading plan.

The personal copy of his own operation order held by Commander Transport Group, Southern Attack Force bore his handwritten note opposite the colored sketch for the time on 20 November when the landing was to be made:

> This is the condition we may expect except possibility less water.[14]

The LCVP landing craft in this particular sketch was shown grounded 50 yards from the beach.

The Operation Order 2–43 at the next lower echelon of command in the Transport Group, Commander Assault Transports, Southern Attack Force, ran to 22 pages, making at least 55 pages of essential reading for those at the bottom of the amphibian totem pole.[15]

The basic problem for the amphibians was that of producing with amtracs of two models with different top speeds, a simultaneous landing on three contiguous beaches about six and a half miles over the horizon from the Boat Rendezvous Area. This was to be done after the execution of a simultaneous 70° turn of the first three assault waves, when they were about three miles from the designated beaches.

The basic problem was complicated by the necessity of first putting together, in darkness, the amtracs carried on each of ten transports with the Marines carried on three of these transports (*Heywood, Zeilin, Arthur Middleton*), and secondly, putting together, in darkness, the second and third waves of amphibious tractors which arrived off Betio in LSTs and other Marines, arriving off Betio in the same three transports.

The plan called for the Marines to be loaded from the three transports into ten different ships' LCVPs and transferred therein to designated amtracs.

The extent of this boating complication is shown by the intricate plan needed to solve it. A diagram of the issued order is shown herewith. There were 42 amtracs and four LCSs in the first waves, 24 LVT(2) in the second wave and 21 LVT(2)s in the third wave. The Landing Craft Support (LCS) armed with rockets accompanied the leading waves.

(1) Delay in Landing the Three Waves of Amtracs

Tarawa was the first landing in the Pacific where the actual speed which

[14] Then Captain, now Rear Admiral H. B. Knowles, USN (Ret.).

[15] (a) COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, Group Two (CTF 53) Op Order A104–43 (Revised), 4 Nov. 1943; (b) CTU 53.1.1 Op Order 2–43, 10 Nov. 1943.

the amtracs made was a vital factor in the coordination of offensive action at How Hour.

According to the "book," the LVT(1) had a top water speed of 6.5 miles per hour, while the newer LVT(2) was capable of 7.5 miles per hour.[16] But, experience indicated that these craft did not make their designed speed in the open sea when loaded for an assault landing.

The slower LVT(1)s from the ten large transports coming from New Zealand were designated for the 1st Assault Wave. This was a wise decision because it was known that they would be present, while the availability of the newer, faster model to be delivered by the LSTs coming from Samoa was doubtful during the pre-embarkation planning period. The LVT(1)s had been fitted out by the Second Division at Wellington, New Zealand, with Bren Gun Carrier armor around the forward portion of the vehicle. While this was highly desirable, it undoubtedly increased their weight, and reduced their speed.

When the LVT(2)s came out through the bow doors of the LSTs, it was dark and each LVT driver was pretty much on his own. Hence:

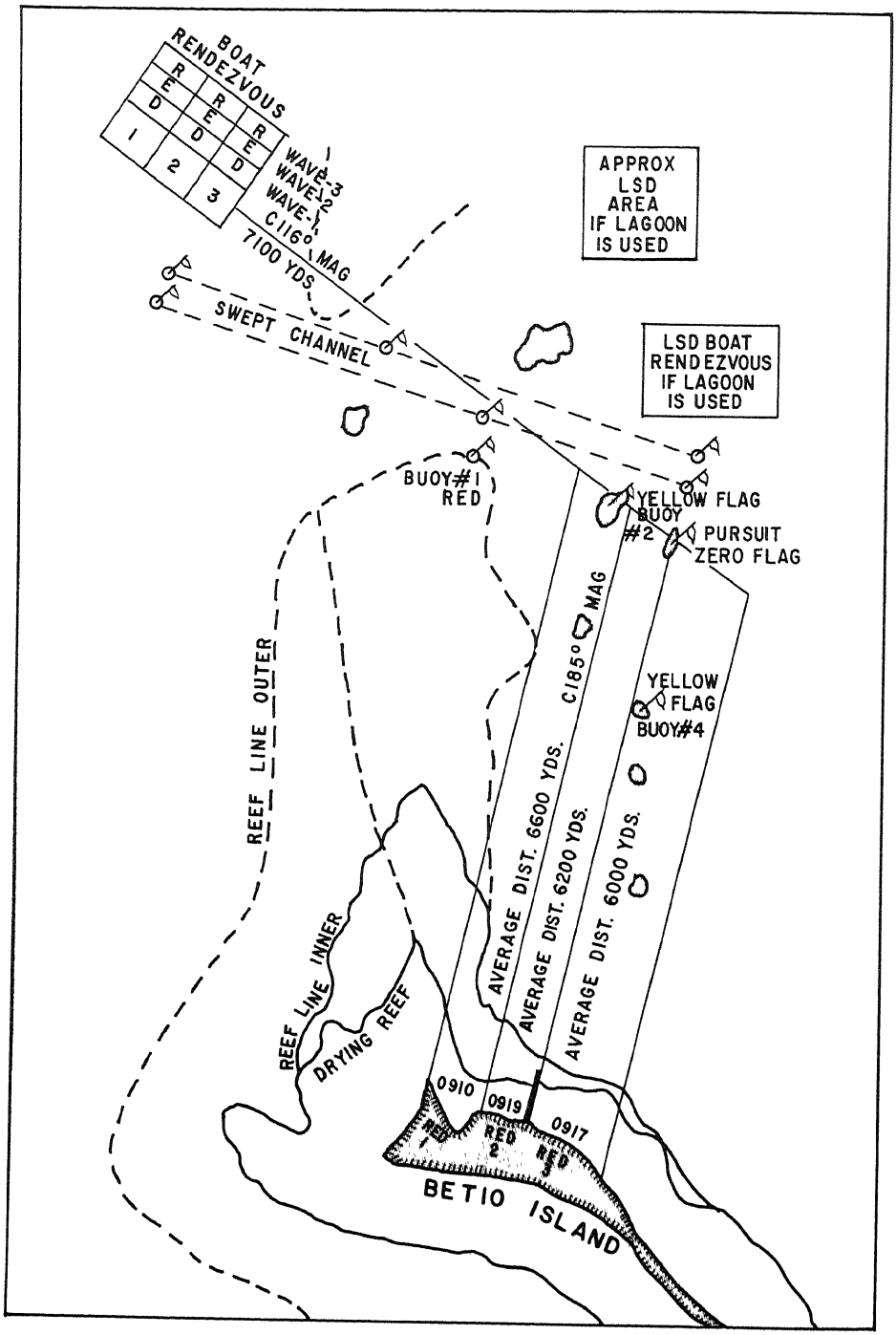
> Considerable confusion resulted while attempting to transfer troops into the LVTs brought from Samoa in the LSTs, as the LVT drivers failed to carry out the instructions issued to them relative to their position in the rendezvous.[17]

From the Transport Area, the individual amtracs of the assault waves had to grope about in the breaking dawn to find the Rendezvous Area, and form up in columns, the shorter 2nd and 3rd Assault Waves on the left flank of the long 1st Assault Wave. Then, in daylight, all three waves moved in columns abreast up to the Line of Departure, which was from 6,000 yards to 6,600 yards from the assault beaches, Red One, Red Two and Red Three. When abreast the beaches, all the amtracs of the first three waves executed a simultaneous turn toward the beach.

The great difficulty was that due to the strong westerly set, these slow moving craft were being carried away from the Line of Departure at a rate of speed close to one-quarter of their actual speed over the ground. So the amtracs took much time and open throttle operation in regaining yards lost due to current. The prelanding schedules for these amphibious vehicles were worked out on a basis of 4.5 knots, which is slow enough. When the actual

[16] FTP 207, subj: Characteristics of British and United States Landing Craft, Landing Ships, Landing Vehicles (2nd ed.), Feb. 1943, pp. 116, 120.

[17] COMTRANSDIV Four, GALVANIC Report, 30 Dec. 1943, p. 6.



Landing Plan Red Beaches, Betio Island.

speed over the ground was reduced to 3.5 knots or less by the current, the landing schedules developed considerable slippage.

As Commander Transport Group reported:

> After the troops were transferred to the LVTs at the *USS Zeilin,* there was considerable confusion due to the constant moving and drifting of the LVTs. It was a jumbled mess and proved very difficult to get the LVTs in some sort of order early enough to arrive at the rendezvous at the designated time. There were also many LVTs which became disabled due to mechanical failure between the assembly area and the Line of Departure necessitating transfer of troops and equipment to spare LVT's which of course separated many units from their organizations.[18]

The *Virgo* noted in her GALVANIC Report:

> Three LVTs being carried in the hold had a low priority but due to the situation as it developed some LVT's in the first wave had broken down and fell out. The three LVTs were hoisted out and the troops from the first three broken down LVTs that were sighted, transferred to the three new ones and were despatched to the beach.[19]

But despite these handicaps, the well-planned very early arrival of the transports in the Transport Area permitted the first three assault waves to leave the Transport Area for the Rendezvous Area on time at 0540 and then to leave the Rendezvous Area a bit ahead of time for the Line of Departure.[20]

Long before the first three assault waves reached the Rendezvous Area, the Japanese coastal defense batteries had again opened fire on the Expeditionary Force and the big transports had retreated out of range.

Despite this:

> The first three waves left the rendezvous area at 0636, as scheduled, but arrived at the Line of Departure at 0825, thirty-nine minutes late. Overloading, wind, sea, and an ebb tide together with the poor mechanical condition of a number of the leading amtracs combined to slow the first wave to a speed . . . one-half knot below the allowed speed which was based on information received from Marine headquarters to the effect that the amtracs could make a speed of four and one-half knots in fully loaded condition.[21]

Since from the cockpit of the amtracs little could be seen of a flat island four to five miles away, the Line of Departure was to be marked by a ship

[18] Commander Transport Group GALVANIC Report.

[19] *Virgo* (AKA-20) Action Report, 27 Dec. 1943.

[20] (a) CTF 53 Op Order A104–43, Time Schedule in para 7 of Appendix 1 to Annex D; (b) *Heywood* and *Monrovia* GALVANIC Reports.

[21] COMTRANSDIV Four GALVANIC Report, 30 Dec. 1943, p. 1. The Marines had had Amphibian Tractors Battalions since the fall of 1941.

of reasonable size as well as by buoys. A new minesweeper, the *Pursuit* (AM-108), drew the assignment for this hot spot.

The *Pursuit* took position at the Line of Departure at 0715 and was under shore battery fire until 0727. Commander Transport Group later reported that the *Pursuit*:

> was considerably to the northward of the Line of Departure.[22]

Be that as it may, the *Pursuit* informed CTF 53 early that the amtracs were running 24 minutes behind time, and:

> Due to a headwind they were not only unable to make up time but lost more time.[23]

It was obvious to a good many people well before the LVTs reached the Line of Departure that making something less than four knots' speed and with three miles or a bit more to go from the Line of Departure to the beach the Navy was not going to land the Marines at the scheduled time. So at 0803, Commander Southern Attack Force postponed How Hour to 0845, and then at 0824, to 0900, still an impossible requirement from the viewpoint of the boat officers guiding the early waves to the beach and the drivers in the amtracs.

CHANGE IN RUN IN TIME FOR THE ASSAULT WAVES

When Commander Transport Group first issued the time schedule for the Assault Boat Waves, he advised his subordinates:

> Be prepared for some changes in this schedule as the result of further time studies on rehearsals.[24]

All the pre-rehearsal time schedules for the first three assault waves called for a 40-minute run in to the beaches from the Line of Departure.

An examination of Annex JIG (time schedule) of Transport Division Four's Operation Order 2–43, issued on 10 November 1943 after the dress rehearsal, indicates that by this date it had been accepted at the transport level of command that the run to the beach from the Line of Departure should be based on 44 minutes instead of the long accepted 40 minutes, and that the 1st Assault Wave should leave the Line of Departure at 0746, or

[22] CTG 53.1 GALVANIC Report, 1 Dec. 1943.

[23] *Pursuit* GALVANIC Report, 6 Dec. 1943, p. 4.

[24] COMFIFTHPHIBFORGRP Two, (CTF 53), Op Order A104–43 (Revised), Appendix 1 to Annex D, para 7c.

How Hour minus 44, instead of 0750 or How Hour minus 40, as previously planned.

This change shows up in file copies of the Debarkation Schedules and Time Schedules for the Assault Boat Waves issued by Commander Transport Division Four, by the *Heywood* and by the *Harry Lee,* a relief ship for the first wave. All their orders show a 44-minute run to the beach for Wave One. The *Arthur Middleton* report for GALVANIC states:

> The first wave was not turned toward beach until 0830 or 44 minutes late.

This further confirms that at the transport level an important four minutes had been added to the coordination schedule.

The four-minute increase in time for the run to the beach was based on that fact that Beach Red One was 6,600 yards not 6,000 yards from the Line of Departure. It would take four minutes for an amtrac at 4.5 knots to run that extra 600 yards. If a simultaneous landing at Red One, Red Two and Red Three was to take place at 0830, the schedule had to be geared to the amtracs which had the furthest to go.

The file copy in Group Two, Fifth Amphibious Force (Rear Admiral Hill's administrative command) files and Admiral Hill's personal copy of the CTF 53 Operation Order turned over by him to the Naval History Division, each contain Commander Transport Division Four's Op Order 2–43 of 10 November 1943.

This latter order showed the change indicating the first wave would leave the Line of Departure at 0746, instead of 0750 as required in the Transport Landing Attack Order issued on 28 October 1943 prior to the dress rehearsal.[25]

It is possible that Commander Transport Group (Knowles) did not appreciate the impact of this four-minute change on the coordination of air and gun bombardment on the beaches, should How Hour be changed on the basis of the time the First Assault Wave left the Line of Departure. It is further possible that CTF 53's (Rear Admiral Hill) attention was never drawn to this important change.

In any case:

> At a point 6,000 yards from the Line of Departure, the Boat Flotilla Commander received word from the Control Boat that he was twenty (20) minutes behind schedule. Because of the fact that the LVT(1)s which comprised the first wave were then operating at full speed, he was unable to make up lost

[25] (a) CTF 53 Op Order A104–43, Appendix 1 to Annex D, para. 7c; (b) COMTRANSDIV Four Op Order 2–43, 10 Nov. 1943, Annex J.

> time, and upon arrival at the Line of Departure, he was an additional nineteen (19) minutes or a total of thirty-nine minutes late. This was due to the poor mechanical condition of the tractors as well as to their overloaded condition.[26]

At 0740 the *Dashiell* reported by TBS to CTF 53:

> Chickens are 24 minutes behind schedule.

The transport *Zeilin* noted:

> Overloading, strong westerly set and probably faulty navigation were the principal causes for the failure of the LVTs to make the Line of Departure on time. The ship boat wave commander reports that the LVTs could not keep up with the assault boat as they did during the rehearsals at Efate.[27]

The *Pursuit,* the control vessel on the Line of Departure, reported to Rear Admiral Hill that the lead wave was 39 minutes behind time at the Line of Departure, crossing at 0825. This indicated the *Pursuit* also had received the word about the change to 0746 as to the correct moment for the lead wave to leave the Line of Departure.[28] Rear Admiral Hill in his GALVANIC report, and on the basis of a TBS report from his staff aviator flying over the lagoon, logged the lead wave as having crossed the Line of Departure at 0823—which was 37 minutes after 0746 when this event should have taken place.

With this information and an awareness that a 44-minute run in was required, it would seem that How Hour should have been reset by Rear Admiral Hill to 0907 or 0909 depending on whether the 0823 or 0825 crossing time reported to him by TBS was used.

In any case, the 1st Assault Wave was followed across the Line of Departure, as planned, by the next two waves at approximately three-minute intervals.[29]

The amphibians and their landing craft on the morning of 20 November were shooting for a How Hour of 0830. Perhaps as they got behind schedule they remembered and took some solace from the fact that at the post-rehearsal conference, Colonel Merritt A. Edson, the Chief of Staff of the Second Marine Division, had:

> Criticized early arrival of first wave; early arrival of waves inexcusable; late arrival preferable.[30]

[26] COMTRANSDIV Four GALVANIC Report, p. 6

[27] *Zeilin* Action Report, 15 Dec. 1943, p. 2.

[28] *Pursuit* Action Report, 6 Dec. 1943, p. 4.

[29] *Heywood* (APA-6) and *Monrovia* (APA-31) Action Reports.

[30] Memoranda of a Conference of CTF 53 on 10 Nov. 1943, para. 2.

This comment was made because the first rehearsal wave had arrived at the beach five minutes early.

Touch down on Beach Red One was 0910 for Wave One and at about 0919 and 0917 for Beach Red Two and Beach Red Three respectively. Rear Admiral Hill logged the first wave landing at 0917 but a number of TBS logs show that CTF 53 sent a message at 0914 saying "First troops hit the beach at 0913." The *Pursuit* at the Line of Departure logged the landing at 0913. The *Ringgold,* in the lagoon, logged it at 0905. The *Dashiell,* also in the lagoon and specifically stating her position as 1,500 yards off the beach, logged it at 0913. The commands much closer to the beach than Rear Admiral Hill's flagship, the *Maryland,* and seeing it more clearly, all logged the first wave landing earlier than CTF 53. The Marines reported they landed on Red One at 0910 and that time is supported by a TBS message.[31]

Merely to indicate that observers who came along for the ride do not always get the word, one observer recorded:

> At 0800 H-Hour was changed to 0845 pursuant principally to discovery that high water would be later than calculated. The original H-Hour was chosen so as to be a little before extreme high water so as to give boats other than LVTs . . . the advantage of coming in and getting out under the optimum condition.[32]

In any case the delays in H-Hour meant that the 20 to 25 Marines in many of the amtracs had to endure more than four hours in a crowded, wallowing craft before being deposited on their appointed hostile beach.

Fronting some 2,600 feet of the beaches and some 20 yards inland from the water's edge, was a barricade of sand bags and logs about five feet in height. This barricade offered some real protection to the Marines from those Japanese still alive and fighting bitterly from rifle pits and pillboxes. It was a minor break for the better in a tough day for the Marines.

SUMMARY—TARDY ASSAULT WAVES

To this scribe, who was not there, but who has studied the record, the delay in landing the early assault waves seemingly arose from an inadequate anticipation of known adverse currents and a scanty bow to the modest

[31] Stockman, *Tarawa.*

[32] COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS GALVANIC Report, Vol. 4, 11 Jan. 1944, Encl. (G), para. 6. Observations by Brigadier General J. L. Underhill, USMC.

reserve speed of the amtracs, coupled with the failure to adjust How Hour to the number of minutes the amtracs were behind time at the Line of Departure and the time needed for them to run to the beach. This "time needed for the run in" might well have been tempered by a seaman's guess that having lost time up to the Line of Departure, the amtracs might lose a bit more before reaching the beach.

In adjusting How Hour it appears very definitely that a 40-minute run to the beach was used by CTF 53 in lieu of a 44-minute run to the beach. The latter figure was an essentiality for a simultaneous landing and for the exact timing of naval gunfire support.

(2) Pre-landing—Gunfire Support—Tarawa

Based on experience gained primarily during the North African invasion by the amphibious forces of the Atlantic Fleet, a completely revised chapter on Naval Gunfire in FTP 167 ("Landing Operations Doctrine") was promulgated by COMINCH on 1 August 1943 and distributed to the Fleet.

This newly issued chapter provided that the Naval Gunfire Annex to an operational order issued by a Commander Naval Attack Force would:

> contain the directions for furnishing naval gunfire support for the Landing Force. Its preparation is a joint function of the Staff of the Commander Attack Force and the Staff of Commander Landing Force.

The detailed instructions provided that:

> The staff of the Marine Division Commander [should] outline on the map prepared for the operation the probable target locations and probable enemy dispositions in the area to be attacked.
>
> * * * * *
>
> The assignment of fire missions is a function of the Staff of the Commanding General, Marines.
>
> * * * * *
>
> The Combined Staffs of the Commander Naval Attack Force and Commanding General, Marines now prepare the plan of naval gunfire. Upon approval, this plan is authenticated and issued as the Naval Gunfire Annex.

As Admiral Hill wrote to General Holland M. Smith:

> As for the fire support plan itself, I personally have no apologies for it. I think that in the light of our knowledge at the time, it was the best that could be devised, particularly under the conditions of the operation which permitted no supporting bombardment until the morning of the landing. You

were not there, but must have been familiar with the problem, which we anticipated correctly, viz., that once the heavy gunfire commenced, the whole island would be obliterated by a cloud of dust, thereby requiring that practically all fire be conducted by indirect (radar) control. The problem was further complicated by the decision to make the landing on the lagoon side where the shallow water prevented any but a couple of destroyers being able to get into bombardment position for the destruction of beach defenses.[33]

Major General Holland M. Smith was the officer responsible for naming the fire missions to be carried out by naval gunfire, and as Admiral Hill wrote:

> Actually, as you and I both know, there never was the slightest disagreement over these fire support plans for Dog Day either at Tarawa or subsequent operations. For Tarawa, the gunnery officer of your staff and of my staff worked together day and night and in complete harmony on this plan. It received my approval, and must have received yours, inasmuch as you were the responsible officer for it.[34]

The primary planning task of Rear Admiral Hill, placed on him by his Task Force Commander, was to compress into the less than three hours between daylight and touchdown time for the first wave of amtracs, air and gun bombardment which would destroy or neutralize the strong Japanese defenses. It was a formidable task, but it was believed that the means available were adequate, even though this was the first United States assault against a heavily defended and compact beach area.

GUNFIRE SUPPORT TARAWA—THE PLAN

Commander Assault Forces Operation Plan called for gunfire support in three phases as follows:

> Phase I. Prearranged neutralization and counter-battery fires delivered mainly by heavy ships at moderately long range. The ships were told that "For knocking out heavy turret guns, it may be necessary for heavy ships to close the range to 2000 or 3000 yards, and to employ AP (armor piercing) projectiles."
>
> Phase II. Close support fires mainly by cruisers and destroyers at close range on the landing beach areas just before H-Hour to support amtrac landings.
>
> Phase III. Called fires on targets of opportunity controlled by Shore Fire Control Parties after they have landed (not earlier than H plus THIRTY,

[33] HWH to HMS, letter, 5 Nov. 1948.
[34] *Ibid.*

but continuing possibly for one or more days). Continued slow neutralization fire on target areas 400 to 800 yards from the nearest troops.[35]

Thirty-five minutes were allocated to air bombardment and strafing and one hour and fifty minutes to gun bombardment.

When all the figures had been added up, Rear Admiral H. F. Kingman, Commander Fire Support Group, reported that the total rounds of ammunition which had been fired at Betio Island approximated the following:

19,500 rounds 5-inch, average range 6,400 yards
2,650 rounds 6-inch
800 rounds 8-inch, average range 7,900 yards
600 rounds 14-inch, average range 12,500 yards
850 rounds 16-inch [36]

By and large, gun ranges were excessive, as CINCPAC later noted:

The *Indianapolis* opened fire at Tarawa at 22,000 yards using indirect fire. The range was excessive and the results were unsatisfactory.[37]

As has been remarked before, WATCHTOWER and TOENAILS were poor operations for training gunfire support ships, and for bettering the judgment of either planners or operators in the fine art of first-rate gunfire support against a well-defended coral atoll.

One marked improvement in gunnery did result from TOENAILS, where it had been learned that high-capacity ammunition with thinly cased shells was inadequate to pierce Japanese defense structures. However, if armor-piercing projectiles were used, an appreciable angle of fall had to be provided by increasing the gun range and reducing the powder charge, otherwise the AP projectile would ricochet without exploding.

When writing his autobiography after the war was over and done, General Holland M. Smith depreciated the shore bombardment at Tarawa in these words:

Perhaps the bombardment did stun them and disrupt their communications. Otherwise, they might have sunk some of our transports and wrecked our planes. As it was, the damage . . . was minor.

* * * * *

[35] COMGENFIFTHCORPS Op Plan 1–43, 13 Oct. 1943, p. 1.

[36] (a) CTG 53.4 (Commander Fire Support Group), GALVANIC Action Report, Ser 00187 of 25 Dec. 1943; (b) Reply by COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS to Bureau of Ordnance letter S78/PL/002077 of 3 Dec. 1943, Ser 00187 of 21 Jan. 1944.

[37] CINCPAC GALVANIC Operations, Preliminary study of Action Reports, Ser 00294 of 31 Dec. 1941, para. 14.

> Instead of three days' preliminary bombardment, Betio needed at least ten.[38]

This should be compared with what Major General Holland M. Smith wrote in his Action Report on GALVANIC:

> The naval bombardment plans for GALVANIC were prepared in collaboration with representatives of the Fifth Amphibious Force, 2d Marine Division and 27th Infantry Division. These plans in turn were approved by the Commanding Officer of the respective units or force Future bombardment plans will be prepared in the same manner.
>
> The naval bombardment prior to the actual landing was greater per square unit of ground than had ever previously been given in preparation for a landing operation Nevertheless, it did not prevent enemy resistance. This does not mean it was not effective, for without naval gunfire, the landing could not have been made. . . .[39]

On 17 December 1943, the same officer wrote:

> This corps is working in close relations to the Navy echelons on Naval gunfire and air support. All Naval call fire training is conducted with Corps supervision. All direct support aircraft training with ground elements of the Corps is conducted under the supervision of the Corps.[40]

A further problem in connection with the neutralization phase of gun bombardment arose due to the changes in How Hour. Neutralization gunfire support was due to lift five minutes before the amtracs touched down. At this time an air strike on the beach areas coming off of the big carriers lasting about five minutes was to take over.

THE AIRCRAFT DON'T GET THE WORD

The aircraft from Task Group 53.6 (Escort Carrier Support Group)—and ordered to take over this chore only at 0749 on the morning of D-Day—were in the air when the delays in H-Hour were made. They did not get the word about the change in How Hour. Communication logs of these carrier squadrons and their carriers are no longer available in the files, so it cannot be determined if the Task Group Commander or their Unit Commander tried to get the word to them.

The original plan called for the planes to strafe from 0825 to 0830. So

[38] Smith, *Coral and Brass*, pp. 122, 131.

[39] COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS GALVANIC Report, Vol. I, p. 16.

[40] COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS, Corps Training Memorandum No. 11–43, Ser 00701 of 17 Dec. 1943, p. 5.

the planes strafed from 0825 to 0830. Since until Rear Admiral Hill's despatch was received this task had not been theirs, the escort carrier planes had not been previously instructed in this particular strafing assignment.

When the strafing aircraft flew away about 0830, the gunfire support ships picked up their neutralization firing chore again and continued to shoot until 0855. CTF 53 ordered them to cease fire at that hour. As the scheduled fire bombardment shrouded Betio Island in a pall of dust and smoke, actual pin-pointing of targets became most difficult to impossible and, by and large, area bombardment was the best that could be done during this phase.

Rear Admiral Hill reported that the reason he stopped all gunfire at 0855 was:

> Continuation of naval gunfire through the heavy smoke at this uncertain period was considered unsafe to assault troops and reliance had to be placed on VF aircraft being able to continue strafing and holding the enemy neutralized until the troops landed.[41]

The Gunnery Officer of the *USS Dashiell* (DD-659) commented on Rear Admiral Hill's order to stop all gunfire at 0855:

> In this case everything was very clear and the necessity for continuing fire appeared to be quite obvious but it could not be continued because of a schedule and because apparently the Commanding Officers of Fire Support [section] #4 [in the *Dashiell*] could not be depended upon to make a clear estimate of the situation when they were only 1500 yards from the scene of action and the controlling authority was over the horizon.[42]

The *Dashiell* was in the lagoon but did not fire between 0855 and 0912, and then fired only three minutes of counter-battery fire on the northwestern end of Betio upon receipt of orders from CTF 53. It was 0934 before the *Dashiell* opened fire again. The *Ringgold*, also in the lagoon, ceased fire at 0855 and reopened fire at "about 0925." In other words, only one of the two destroyers in the lagoon fired during the crucial minutes of the amtracs' landing, and that one only for three minutes, and not for the sole purpose of supporting the troop landings.

It seems possible that CTF 53 was hoping against hope that the amtracs would land close to 0900 when he made this decision for all ships to cease fire at 0855. Definitely, he was not preparing the beach for an amtrac landing ten minutes or more later.

In any case, Rear Admiral Hill in his GALVANIC report frankly said:

[41] CTF 53 GALVANIC Report, 13 Dec. 1943, Encl. (A), p. 32.

[42] *Dashiell* Action Report, 5 Dec. 1943, p. 8.

> To prevent recurrence of the error made at Tarawa of ceasing this neutralization fire too early, those ships which can actually see the boat wave and accurately determine its distance from the beach at all times, must be authorized to continue this close supporting fire after the general order to cease firing is given, until, in the opinion of the Commanding Officer, further firing becomes dangerous to the landing personnel.[43]

Major General Julian C. Smith, Commanding the Marine Second Division, in making his post-Tarawa recommendations for future naval gunfire support, voiced the inadequacies of the gunfire on the landing beaches just prior to the landings, but added that subsequent thereto:

> Naval Gunfire in close support of Assault Landing Teams was excellent.[44]

(3) Pre-Landing Air Bombardment

Rear Admiral Alfred E. Montgomery, Commander Task Group 50.3, temporarily in the *Essex* (CV-9), issued his Operation Plan 53–43 for GALVANIC on 7 November 1943. The flagship was anchored in Pallikulo Bay, Espiritu Santo Island, New Hebrides most of that day.

Unfortunately, the Air Support Commander, CTG 50.3, did not fly off to confer with Rear Admiral Hill, CTF 53, who was only 150 miles away conducting the dress rehearsal at Efate, New Hebrides on the same day.

As Admiral Hill later said:

> I never had a chance to meet and discuss plans with Admiral Montgomery, my air support commander.

This was two days after the GALVANIC rehearsal critique for Task Force 52 and its Makin Atoll assault had been held in far away Hawaii. One of the lessons of these far away TF 52 rehearsals was that the first air strike should not be so early in the morning that the pilots could not visually distinguish targets on the ground as small as slit trenches or individual pillboxes.

In February, 1952, Admiral Turner wrote that Rear Admiral Pownall, Commander Carrier Force (CTF 50), agreed at the rehearsal critique in Pearl Harbor on 5 November 1943, that in order to benefit from this rehearsal experience, the first air strike at Makin and Tarawa should be at 0610 instead of at 0545 as prescribed in the existing operation orders.[45]

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[44] CGSECONDMARDIV, Ser 00104 of 2 Jan. 1944.

[45] RKT to Chief of Military History, letter, 12 Feb. 1952, Encl (1), p. 12.

It is a fact that the first air strike at Makin was rescheduled to 0610 from 0545 and actually occurred at 0615.

This change from the existing operation orders at Tarawa would similarly require that W-Hour, the completion of the planned half hour of air bombardment at Betio Island, would be set for 0640.

However, when CTG 50.3 issued his Op Plan he specified W-Hour at Tarawa as 0600.[46] If there was to be half an hour of air bombardment, the first bombs would be dropped at 0530. This was neither in accord with the written Operation Orders he had received from higher authority (which would have W-Hour at 0615) nor with the post-TF 52 rehearsal decision which would have started the strikes at 0610 and completed them at a W-Hour of 0640. Neither was it in accord with the voice radio-announced W-Hour of 0620.

And CTF 53 was another man in far off New Hebrides who did not get the word about the change. His revised Operation Order A104–43, issued at 0800 4 November, which specified W-Hour at 0615, remained unchanged so far as the copy of this order in his Flag files and in lower echelon files reveal.

It appears logical to assume that Rear Admiral Turner did not pass on the word about the change to Rear Admiral Hill, and that Rear Admiral Pownall did not pass on the word about the change to Rear Admiral Montgomery. This was both a personal failure by these officers and presumably also a serious staff failure.

But, in any case, the planes from *Essex* (CV-9) and *Bunker Hill* (CV-17) in TG 50.3 were late for their first air strike on 20 November. This tardiness exists no matter whether the operational plans or order of their immediate senior, Rear Admiral Montgomery, or the requirements of the written operation orders of Rear Admirals Turner or Pownall, were controlling. The first air strike commenced about 0613 and lasted past 0622 (one participating squadron reporting until 0627). Neither Commander Task Group 50.3 nor the Commanding Officers of the two carriers, *Essex* and *Bunker Hill,* who carried out the first strike on Dog Day mention this delay or its cause in their GALVANIC reports. The matter, however, was mentioned indirectly at a lower level in Task Group 50.3.[47] And Commander Fighting Squadron Nine stated:

[46] (a) CTG 50.3 Op Plan 53–43, 7 Nov. 1943, Encl. (C), Annex B, pp. 1–4; (b) CTF 53 Report of Tarawa Operation, 13 Dec. 1943, Part VI, para. 3(a)(3), p. 55.

[47] CTG 50.3, *Essex, Bunker Hill, Independence,* GALVANIC Reports and War Diaries.

> It is the opinion of this squadron that the take-off time of early morning strikes was too early.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Considerable difficulty was experienced in affecting join up after take-off due to darkness and the fact that so many planes of *Essex* and *Bunker Hill* were in the same immediate vicinity.
>
> * * * * *
>
> At the times the strafing of strikes I and II was started, it was still dark enough for the tracers to blind the pilots.[48]

Another fault in Rear Admiral Montgomery's Op Plan was its failure to carry forward for the aviators of his command to read the *vital amphibious requirement* set forth in Rear Admiral Turner's order:

> Time of strafing beaches with reference to H-hour are approximate. The distance of the boats from the beach is the governing factor.[49]

The definite and clear requirement of the last sentence of this order was modified by Rear Admiral Montgomery to provide that the strafing would take place:

> From H-5 (when 1st wave of boats has approched to 1000 yards from Red Beaches) to H + 15, and after naval gunfire on beach areas has ceased. Strafe installations from water's edge to 100 yards inland, from RED BEACH 1, 2 and 3.[50]

So read the instructions to the *Bunker Hill* and *Essex.*

When Rear Admiral Hill made the important decision at about 0745 to direct the jeep carriers (TU 53.6.2) to make the pre-landing strafing attack instead of letting the planes from the *Bunker Hill* and *Essex,* in the Southern Carrier Group (Task Group 50.3), carry through their planned assignment, it seems most unlikely that there was any time to brief the jeep carrier pilots that the distance the amtracs were from the beach was the controlling factor in starting their strafing. Just getting the 12 planes from the *Nassau* (CVE-16) and 16 aircraft of the *Barnes* (CVE-20) into the air and to the beach for what was then an 0825 deadline probably seemed the most important thing at the moment. The *Barnes* launched her first plane for this flight from a position 41 miles southeast of Tarawa at 0751 and only three minutes after CTF 53 issued his order. Her last plane for this mission was off at 0813. The planes from the jeep carriers just made this 0825 deadline and did their tasks as they understood them. Then, due to the postponement

[48] *Independence* GALVANIC Report, 4 Dec. 1943, Encl (B).
[49] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR Op Plan A2–43, 23 Oct. 1943, Annex C, para. 3(X)(8).
[50] COMCARDIV 12 (CTG 50.3) Op Plan 53–43, 7 Nov. 1943 Encl. (D) to Annex B, p. 2.

of How Hour for 30 minutes, they were told to do the strafing over again at 0855. Some of the planes had a very short supply of ammunition for this second strafing attack. Apparently no one thought to tell them to watch the amtracs and strafe just before they touched down. None of the carriers nor squadrons mention the coordination of the strafing with the lead amtracs in their reports.[51]

The results of the strafing attacks and of the air bombardment on Betio Island were far less than expected or hoped for, partially because the jeep carriers were unable to furnish as many planes as the big carriers would have, due to the overriding requirement of the small carrier to provide CAP (Combat Air Patrol). One experienced naval aviator, Commander Carrier Air Group Nine, in *Essex* further reported:

> The apparent effect of the subject strikes was very disappointing to this observer. About ninety per cent of all bombs were seen to hit in assigned areas. Hits were seen within 10 or 15 feet of assigned gun targets—but after a slight pause these guns were firing again. . . . Incendiaries had no effect. The great majority of all bombs merely dug a nice well and raised a great cloud of coral dust which hampered the bombing of other planes.[52]

The Commander Fighting Squadron One who made the 'special strafing mission during troop landing," reported:

> Enemy concealment was good. Only way to spot targets was by gunflashes.

The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet reported to COMINCH in his GALVANIC report:

> It was evident that the carrier squadrons were not fully trained to provide efficient air support of amphibious operations. One carrier commander reported that flights from carriers operated over the target area on D-Day with little semblance of orderly procedure. Serious confusion resulted from dive and glide bombing and strafing being done to the taste of individual leaders.[53]

NAVAL AIR EFFORT AT TARAWA

As the Army's history softly says:

> Clearly, the most disappointing aspect of the entire Tarawa operation was the execution of air support for the landing.

[51] *Nassau, Barnes,* CTU 53.6.2 GALVANIC Reports.

[52] Memorandum for Air Officer, *USS Essex* of 30 Nov. 1943, para 2(A) in CAG Nine, Action Report, 18 to 25 Nov. 1943, no ser, no date.

[53] CINCPAC GALVANIC Report, 31 Dec. 1943, p. 5.

It seems reasonable that some of the problems in connection with the air support and air bombardment arose because, during the early planning and training stages for GALVANIC, there was no designated Commander Aircraft assigned to the staff of Rear Admiral Turner as Commander Fifth Amphibious Force. Commander Aircraft, Fifth Amphibious Force was a necessary cog in planning for the employment of air units in direct support of the amphibious operation, including developing air bombardment plans as well as control of all aircraft in the objective area.

During September 1943, no one was assigned to this task. Then on 3 October 1943, Admiral Nimitz provided Colonel William O. Eareckson, Army Air Force, from his own staff for this important task during the next three weeks until Captain H. B. Sallada, U. S. Navy, arrived and relieved Eareckson on 23 October 1943. Rear Admiral Hill and his staff had left for New Zealand four days previously, too late for any personal liaison. Colonel Eareckson continued on as Support Aircraft Commander GALVANIC.[54]

Commander Air-Ground Support Tarawa, a long time naval aviator, noted in his GALVANIC report on 29 November 1943 that:

> 6. During the assault phase, it was noted that the carrier squadrons had little concept of their mission in detail and only a rudimentary idea of how to accomplish this mission.
>
> 7. With the type of beach fortifications employed by the Japanese, longitudinal strafing up and down the beach by fighters is not only ineffective but a mere waste of ammunition.

There were several air support "firsts" at Tarawa, but by and large, few officers were happy about what had been accomplished. As one historian phrased it:

> Air support, handicapped by the small size of the atolls consisted of a few strikes requested by the Marines and many strikes initiated and directed by the Support Air Commander. A total of 650 close support sorties were flown during the three days of battle with good to excellent results. Air observation and photographic missions were also flown and were controlled by the Air Support Commander for the first time. The Tarawa operation also marked the first use of a Support Air Control Unit ashore.[55]

In this connection a comment by another senior naval aviator, Richard F. Whitehead, present at Tarawa seems pertinent:

> Sufficient rehearsals were conducted to familiarize personnel with details of the operation. However, it is to be noted that the Naval Aviation Squadrons

[54] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR GALVANIC Report, Encl. (5).

[55] Administrative History of Amphibious Forces Pacific Fleet, Vol. IV, Part 7, p. 266.

> did not participate in the training or rehearsals with the Marine Division. As naval air plays such an important part in amphibious operations, particularly so in the phase during the passage of the assault troops from the Line of Departure to the actual landing on the beach, this training is considered vital.[56]

As a Captain, Whitehead had reported to the Commanding General Second Marine Division at Wellington, New Zealand on 29 October 1943, and served with the Division as a PHIBCORPS Staff representative in connection with training and operations. In due time, he became Commander Air Support Control Units for the Fifth Amphibious Force. The root of any support aircraft inadequacies that developed during GALVANIC was explained years later by then Vice Admiral Whitehead, who opined:

> My basic problem as Commander Air Support Control Units was with the big carrier pilots. In the mind of most of them, providing close air support was always a diversionary effort. Just like the Army Air Force, they had their eyes focused on the wild blue yonder. Anything as mundane as circling in the target area on call for half an hour or more was pretty irksome.
>
> The pilots from the jeep carriers soon got in the groove and provided A-1 results, but I was constantly having to give a sales talk to the big carrier people. I had to explain the amphibian problem to them, and also I had to explain them to the Amphibian Commander.[57]

(4) Timing of Air and Gun Bombardments With Amtrac Touchdown

The delay in arrival of the first air bombardment, due to the orders of the Carrier Task Group Commander, CTG 50.3, not being in accord with the orders of the Task Force Commander, had a far greater effect than its just being late. It led to a change in assignment by Rear Admiral Hill of the aircraft to do the strafing attacks immediately following the cessation of gunfire. Hence there was a lack of time to brief these pilots in the important amphibious requirement of the timing of the strafing attack based on the distance the amtracs were from the beach.

When How Hour was not adjusted to the actual time the amtracs crossed the Line of Departure, and to the time required for them to reach the

[56] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, Extracts from observers' comments on GALVANIC, Ser 0371 of 23 Dec. 1943, p. 2.

[57] Interview with Vice Admiral Richard F. Whitehead, USN (Ret.), 4 Oct. 1961. Hereafter Whitehead.

beaches, the anticipated coordination of gun and air bombardments with amtrac touchdown could not materialize.

(5) Lack of Water Over the Apron Reef—the Off Beat Tide

The apron reef at Betio was reported on by a Boat Officer guiding in the first amtrac assault wave as follows:

> When approximately 800 yards from the beach, a coral reef with about three feet of water over it was encountered. The water depth remained approximately constant until it shelved up gradually forming the beach itself. . . .[58]

Rear Admiral Turner's Operation Plan included these statements:

> The lagoon reef at Betio is covered to a depth of from 3 to 4 feet from the period two hours before to two hours after high water springs. . . . During high water neap tide the reef is covered by from one to two feet of water and is three-quarters dry at low water.
>
> Being of firm hard coral the reef at low water may be used for transportation and will bear medium tanks. It is considered landing craft could approach the edge of the reef sufficiently close to drop ramps on the coral to enable the safe and early landing of vehicles. . . . Mean spring range is 6 feet and neap range 4 feet.[59]

For those who have not lived with tide tables all their lives, spring tides are normally the highest tides of the lunar month and occur either at, or shortly after, the new moon or at, or shortly after, the full moon. During neap tides the high tide is not very high and the low tide is not very low. In other words the difference between the high and low tide is the smallest during the lunar month. This condition occurs just after the first and after the third quarters of the moon.

Since on 20 November 1943, at Tarawa Atoll, the moon was dwindling to its third quarter, the landing was made during neap tides.[60] A neap tide period is judged advantageous for amphibious landings because extreme low water is not encountered. It is also advantageous to land the assault waves on a rising tide because then the work horses of the assault logistic movement, the LCVP and the LCMs, have the best possible conditions for landing their first important logistic support loads near the flood water period. Specifically,

[58] *Arthur Middleton* Action Report, 7 Dec. 1943, para. 3, subj: Report of Ensign F. W. Gleason, U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, Wave Officer, First Wave Beach Red One.

[59] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR (CTF 54) Op Plan A2–43, Annex B, pp. 11, 29.

[60] *Ibid.*, Annex B, p. 35.

two hours before a flood tide occurring in mid-morning has been judged by experience as the most desirable moment for the first assault troops to hit the beach.

An examination of the 1943–1944 Tide Tables indicates that it would have been necessary to wait until 5 December 1943, for the next favorable neap tide period and until 14 January 1944, for the next favorable spring tide period.

In view of the data furnished in the tide tables, which Rear Admiral Turner issued as Commander Assault Force (CTF-54), it is apparent that the statement beginning "During high water neap tides" already quoted from the operation plan, meant there were only one to two feet of water up to the shore line at high water neap tide. It was obvious that it was anticipated that most LCVP and LCM would ground well before the beach was reached even at this ideal condition.

Commander Southern Attack Force, looking back the short space of five years, wrote in 1949:

> From the commencement of planning, the question of water over the reef at Betio was considered to be one of paramount importance. To assist in this planning, Admiral Nimitz had gathered in Pearl Harbor several former residents of Betio and also some masters of ships who had traded in and out of the lagoon. The opinions of all of these experts indicated that normally four feet of water could be expected over the reef at neap tide.
>
> Commencing on the evening of Dog plus One Day, and extending through the rest of the Assault and Consolidation period. . . . the tides were perfectly normal and ran within an inch or two of those predicted prior to the assault. On those days, at half tide, LCVPs could run right up to the beach, and at high water fully loaded LCMs could land there as well.
>
> Evidence indicated, however, that occasionally, for no apparent reason, there was a failure in the normal functioning of tides within the lagoon, so the Assault Forces were faced with the problems of preparing for all of these contingencies.[61]

Among those who had sailed in the Gilberts there was a strong tradition of the existence of "dodging" tides, days when the water ebbed and flowed irregularly. There were those in TF 53 who did not unduly fear, in advance, "a dodging tide." For, in the sectional sketches of weather reef and beaches showing landing conditions at various phases of the tide, there appears this statement:

[61] Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill to Chief, Historical Division, Department of the Army, letter, 14 Feb. 1949.

State of Reef at Dodging Tides

Not regular. But may possibly be experienced on Nov. 18, 19, or 20. In very fine weather, it has been possible to land boats all day from sunrise to sunset under these conditions, but such occasions are rare.[62]

THE FOREIGN LEGION

The first contingent of the "Foreign Legion" to arrive in Pearl Harbor for work with the intelligence staff were men knowledgeable in regard to Nauru and Ocean Island. These included Mr. W. Bott, civil engineer and former manager of the phosphate plant on Nauru. Then came a considerable number of ex-Gilbert islanders, including traders, mariners and native born.

Lieutenant Commander Gerhard H. Heyen, Royal Australian Naval Reserve, whose experience in the Gilbert Islands covered some 13 years, and Lieutenant Gordon J. Webster, Royal New Zealand Naval Reserve who, as a Merchant Mariner, had been ship-based at Tarawa Atoll from 1939 to 1942, were the two foreign officers who, prior to the Gilbert Island operation, worked closest with Rear Admiral Turner and with Rear Admiral Hill and their staffs. Lieutenant Commander Heyen was a regularly assigned member of the Staff of Commander, Fifth Amphibious Force commencing October 1943.[63] However, there were 13 or 14 others in this "Foreign Legion," of which the following have been identified as participating in GALVANIC:

Major F. L. G. Holland, Fiji Military Force, former Director of Education, Gilbert and Ellice Island Group.
Lieutenant E. Harness, Royal Australian Naval Reserve.
Lieutenant Bruno Raymond, Royal Australian Naval Reserve.
Lieutenant G. J. Webster, Royal New Zealand Naval Reserve.
Lieutenant J. F. Forbes, Royal New Zealand Naval Reserve.
Lieutenant S. S. Page, Royal New Zealand Naval Reserve.
Karl A. Tschaun, Master in the Australian Merchant Marine.
Captain D. C. Warnham, Fiji Military Force.[64]
Private Fred C. Narruhn, 1st Fiji Infantry.

[62] COMFIFTHPHIBGRP Two (CTF 53) Op Order A104–43, Appendix 3 to Annex D.

[63] (a) Staff Interviews; (b) Staff Roster.

[64] Captain Warnham is named in *The Battle for Tarawa* by Captain James R. Stockman, USMC, 1947. Other records spell his name Wernham.

All the above contributed from their knowledge and memories in regard to the hydrography of the Gilberts.

These knowledgeable Allied representatives working with the Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Ocean Areas (JICPOA) and with topographical engineers from the Army, produced hydrographic information for grid overprinted charts and maps for use by gunfire support and air support units. Air reconnaissance sweeps by planes from the Seventh Army Air Force based in the Ellice Islands, and from the new carrier *Lexington* (CV-16) on 18 and 19 September, provided much data for intelligence maps prepared by the Intelligence Section of the Fifth Amphibious Force. Submarines came up with more data including information of a strong westerly current in the vicinity of Tarawa Atoll.[65]

The "Foreign Legion" also produced a joint estimate of five feet of water over the "bottom of seaward end of Betio Pier" (which in effect was the seaward end of the barrier reef) for 1115 on the morning of 20 November 1943. This estimate was tempered by a seaman's bow to a general prudential rule:

> Neap tides are variable and occasionally ebb and flow several times in 24 hours, but variations from the height given should not be greater than one foot.

This precaution was repeated verbatim above the Tarawa tide tables issued by Rear Admiral Turner, and the hazard of a "dodging tide" was mentioned in the following paragraph of the "Foreword" to these tide tables:

> During neap tides, a 'dodging' tide has frequently been observed when the water ebbs and flows several times in 24 hours.[66]

So it is quite apparent that the point had been made strongly and explicitly by the assisting experts, that five feet might be expected but was not promised over the bottom at the seaward end of Betio Pier. As far as they could promise anything, four feet might be anticipated during neap tides, except during "dodging" tides.

In view of all that has been written or said about the tide by those who were present at Tarawa on the forenoon of 20 November 1943, it is worthwhile to reproduce the actual predicted tidal data at Tarawa by the old-time Gilbert Island residents for the 19th through the 21st of November as it

[65] (a) JICPOA Bulletin No. 11–43. Air Target Bulletin of Tarawa Island, Oct. 1943; (b) COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, Op Plan A2–43, Annex C, Intelligence Map of Betio.

[66] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR Op Plan A2–43, Annex B, pp. 29–31.

appeared in the CTF 54 Operation Plan and as prepared by the "Foreign Legion."

Date	High		High		Low		Low	
1943	AM		PM		AM		PM	
Zone Time+12	Time	Feet	Time	Feet	Time	Feet	Time	Feet
November 19	1009	5.0	2242	5.0	0353	1.0	1625	0.9
November 20	1115	5.0	2348	5.1	0459	0.9	1731	0.9
November 21	—	—	1218	5.3	0603	0.8	1833	0.8

The authorities for this action are:

Lieutenant Commander G. H. Heyen, RANR (S)

Lieutenant G. J. Webster, RNZNR

Major F. L. G. Holland, Director of Education, Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.[67]

A member of Major General Holland M. Smith's Staff who examined the reef after the operation reported:

> Since the beach (reef) is to all practical purposes *flat* from outer edge to shore, landing craft or landing boats may ground *at any distance out from the shore,* depending upon the position of slight shallows which they may enounter. The reef width varies from six hundred (600) to eleven hundred (1100) yards.[68]

It might also be noted that, using the above table, at 1115 on 20 November about 18-inch clearance over the outside edge of the barrier reef was all that an LCVP coxswain could hope for with normal combat loading and a normal neap tide, since an LCVP combat loaded had a draft of about three foot six inches. How far this one and a half feet would carry the LCVP on in toward the shore line would certainly vary with the undulations of the bottom from Beach Red One to Beach Red Three and probably at various parts of the individual beaches. It was obvious that it was not anticipated at the command level that the LCVPs would land any Marines dry shod.

FOREBODINGS

The Efate rehearsal critique was highlighted by a prediction by Major Holland, who had signed his name to a piece of paper saying otherwise,

[67] *Ibid.*, Annex B, p. 32.

[68] COMFIFTHPHIBCORPS GALVANIC Report, Vol. 3, Encl. (F), Part IV, Ordnance Officer, letter, 22 Dec 1943.

that there would be no more than three feet of water over the barrier reef at Betio at 1000 on 20 November.[69] If this was so, it was obvious that the LCVPs would be only shuttle craft between the transports and the LVTs, and that a tremendous transfer operation between these two types of craft would very measurably slow up any wave of assault troops after those carried ashore in the first three waves of LVTs, since all the later assault waves were in LCVPs. It would also slow all later logistic support.

Even prior to this prediction, various procedures had been worked out in the transport commands for the amphibious tractors, after the initial assault, to shuttle between where the LCVPs grounded and into the beach, carrying essential logistic support the last important hundred yards.[70] No such procedure reached the formal written plan stage, however, as far as the existing files disclose.

Major Holland's statements markedly increased the worry factor but otherwise wrought no change in the basic plan. It had long before been decided by higher authority that a delay to about 27 November in order to land the assault waves during the high spring tides next occurring then would be impracticable, if the JCS date for the Marshalls was to be met

A surprise landing was believed to be the first requisite for success in GALVANIC. This was to allow time for the Marines at Tarawa and the Army troops at Makin to be firmly established ashore, before an approaching Japanese Fleet from Truk would draw off the gunfire and air support ships to do battle with the Japanese Fleet, leaving the Landing Force unsupported. Admiral Spruance had raised this possibility in his instructions and there was a general feeling throughout the lower levels of the Central Pacific Force that the Japanese Fleet would have to be fought before the Gilbert Islands were secured. It was sound reasoning that the troops must be well established ashore before any Fleet battle took place.[71]

A dawn assault landing would provide no time on that day to beat down the island defenses by pinpointed ship gunfire. A late afternoon assault would put the troops on the beach with only a couple of short hours to accomplish their chores, before darkness would deny them first-rate close air support or close gunfire support.

On balance, therefore, a late morning assault on the chosen day seemed the best.

[69] (a) Knowles; (b) Crowl and Love, *Gilbert and Marshalls* (Army), p. 33.

[70] Knowles.

[71] (a) COMFIFTHFLT to Flag Officers, CENPACFOR, General Instructions for GALVANIC Operation, 29 Oct. 1943; (b) Forrestel, *Admiral Spruance*, p. 71.

JUST WHO PREDICTED WHAT

The 1943 printed Tide Tables of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey for Tarawa were made out for time zone −12 and for standard time. Thus D-Day Tarawa, according to these printed Tide Tables was 21 November 1943. Correcting this date to time zone +12 and to war time, as used by the Southern Attack Force, the Coast and Geodetic Tide Tables predicted morning tides as follows:

Date	AM High Water	Height in feet	AM Low Tides	Height in feet
19 November	1105	4.8	0516	1.7
20 November	1147	4.9	0602	1.7
21 November	1226	5.0	0642	1.7

THE *USS SUMNER* SURVEY

After GALVANIC was over and done, and the slim margin by which the Marine landings at Betio on D-Day had succeeded was appreciated, there was a very considerable amount of criticism from within the Navy raised over the inability of the landing boats to deliver Wave Four and later waves of the Marines, or their support, to the beachheads on schedule.

The hydrographic ship *Sumner* (AGS-5) which had been ordered earlier to Tarawa Atoll to blast coral shoals and coral heads in the lagoon, to install buoys, and to prepare temporary charts, was ordered also to develop tide tables.[72]

The *Sumner* tide tables begin 15 January 1944. The ship's formula for high tide at Tarawa stated that, using zone +12 time, it occurred two hours and seven minutes before high water at Apia, Samoa. The U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Tide Tables showed that this important event occurred (using zone −12 time) three hours and 55 minutes before high water at Apia, Samoa. This is a sizeable variation in exact local times, even when the tide table of one day later is used. Using the "Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean Tide Tables 1943," and applying the formula developed by the *Sumner* to earlier dates, tide predictions for 19–21 November 1943 at Tarawa would have been as follows:

[72] (a) COMSERVRON Four to *Sumner,* 012206 Dec. 1943; (b) *Sumner* (AGS-5) War Diary, Dec. 1943–Jan. 1944.

Date Zone Time + 12	High Tide AM Time	Feet	High Tide PM Time	Feet	Low Tide AM Time	Feet	Low Tide PM Time	Feet
November 19	1103	5.1	2306	5.2	0450	1.6	1711	1.9
November 20	1153	5.3	2357	5.3	0552	1.6	1806	1.9
November 21	0044	5.3	1235	5.3	0628	1.5	1854	1.8[73]

An examination of the "Foreign Legion" prediction, as published in the Assault Force Operation Plan, indicates that they were not based on a standard difference from the Apia, Samoa reference station. It seems possible that they were based on British Admiralty tide tables, considering that the officers producing them were products of the far flung British Commonwealth.

In any case, post-mortems on the tide have produced the following post-invasion predicted high tides for the morning of 20 November 1943:

4.0 feet at 1200 to 1300	British Hydrographic Office
4.0 feet at 1236	U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey
5.2 feet at 1153	*Sumner*[74]

The pre-invasion high tide predictions were:

4.9 feet at 1047	U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey Tide Tables
5.0 feet at 1115	"Foreign Legion"

WHO CONDUCTED WHAT RE TARAWA

In an article in the *Naval Institute Proceedings* in 1962 it was stated:

> After the assault, a naval inquiry board convened at Pearl Harbor to investigate the Tarawa action.[75]

If this was done, those who might have ordered it deny it. Those in authority still living who should have participated in an inquiry deny such participation. Dozens of other officers who might have participated in such an inquiry have drifted into Valhalla without recording the fact. The Office of the Navy's Judge Advocate General reports it has no record of any formal or informal Court of Inquiry or Board of Investigation on the subject, or anything which might be related to the subject, and no record has been

[73] JICPOA Bulletin No. 6–44, Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean Tide Tables—1943, 15 Jan. 1944.

[74] (a) Patrick L. McKiernan, "Tarawa: The Tide that Failed" *U.S. Naval Institute Procedings* (February 1962), pp. 48–49; (b) JICPOA Bulletin 6–44(c), Annex B, p. 31.

[75] McKiernan, p. 46.

located in either CINCPOA, CINCPAC, or Fifth Amphibious Force files. And the simplest refutation is probably found in the fact that it is not a custom of the United States Navy to investigate victories.

What was done evidently was to take a second look into the tidal data produced by the "Foreign Legion."

One of the merchant marine members of this group wrote on 10 January 1959:

> When the American newspapers started feeling that the information about the tides was not right, we asked for an inquiry, which was held in Pearl Harbor.[76]

The author of the *Naval Institute Proceedings* article wrote this scribe that the above statement and a similar one by Lieutenant Commander Heyen, Royal Australian Naval Reserve, the senior member of the "Foreign Legion," were the basis of his statement in the article in the *Naval Institute Proceedings.*[77]

Admiral Spruance and Admiral Hill, the two senior surviving commanders at Tarawa, deny that any Court of Inquiry, Board of Investigation, or any unofficial investigation of any kind was convened to investigate the Tarawa action. When furnished with quotes from the *Naval Institute Proceedings* article, Admiral Spruance wrote:

> I have no recollection whatever of that kind.

Admiral Hill said:

> When I read that article in the *Naval Institute Proceedings,* I said to myself, 'That writer is way off the beam—completely mistaken'. There was no official or unofficial inquiry of any kind. There was a very great desire at all levels of command to gain every practicable ounce of knowledge from the operation, and the operation was thoroughly studied by a great many people. If there had been an inquiry of Tarawa, I would have been in it, because I was the boss man at the spot.[78]

Three of the present senior survivors of the FIFTHPHIBFOR Staff all gave strong negative replies to the question, whether there had been an inquiry or investigation.

There are papers in the files showing that subsequent to Tarawa, conferences at the CINCPAC or PHIBPAC level were held during December 1943

[76] Karl A. Tschaun to Patrick L. McKiernan, letter.

[77] Patrick L. McKiernan to Director of Naval History, letter, 23 Nov. 1965 and reply thereto.

[78] Admiral Hill to GCD, letter, 16 Dec. 1965. See also Rear Admirals Wells and Lewis to GCD letters, 1, 7, and 21 Dec. 1965 and Admiral Spruance to GCD letter, 20 Dec. 1965.

or January 1944 dealing with the following subjects as they related to the Gilbert Island Operations.

1. LVTs
2. Naval Gunfire
3. Logistic and transport loading
4. Support aircraft operations and communications
5. Communications
6. Radar
7. Underwater demolitions
8. Smoke and Rockets

But nary a piece of paper indicates formal discussions on the tides of Tarawa. This researcher has concluded that there was no inquiry. "It just taint so."

It seems quite probable that attempts to extract the last measure of experience from Tarawa, an effort to satisfy consciences of members of the "Foreign Legion," combined with some differences in terminology and procedures used in the Navies of the United States and the British Commonwealth in regard to the handling of unsatisfied grievances, brought this statement into print.

In regard to the "Foreign Legion," Rear Admiral Turner in a report dealing with GALVANIC wrote in 1943:

> The information obtained from them was invaluable, in spite of some of it being inaccurate in matters affecting many of the details, particularly applicable to our operations.[79]

Admiral Nimitz reported to Admiral King:

> Hydrographic information was known to be incomplete. Tidal conditions were about as expected.[80]

TIDE SUMMARY

In summary, it can be said that:

1. All those in command at Pearl realized that the shallow coral reef, aptly called a barrier reef, and spreading offshore like a long wide apron in all directions from Betio Island, was a major hazard for the assault forces from the Southern Attack Force. All were acquainted

[79] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to CINCPAC, report, Ser 00165 4 Dec. 1943.
[80] CINCPAC to COMINCH, 080720 Dec. 1943.

with the possibility of a "dodging tide," but the chances of it occurring on 20 November 1943 were judged slim. The risk was accepted along with dozens of other risks.

2. What was predicted ahead of time in regard to tides turned out not to be too important, because on 20 November 1943 the tides at Tarawa Atoll did not run true to form. Like other sudden variations in natural phenomena, "Man proposes, God disposes." The tide suddenly and dramatically failed. There was inadequate water at the outer edge of the reef. Tidal flow did not correspond to any pre-assault landing prediction.

THE JAPANESE NAVAL PLAN FOR DEFENSE

The Japanese stated that their plans for defense of the Gilberts were as follows:

> When the enemy attacked the Gilberts, our operational plans, which had been drawn up in complete form on about 8 September, were as follows:
>
> 1. Large submarines in the Rabaul area (and if possible, small submarines) were to move up and operate in the vicinity of the Gilberts.
>
> 2. 2d Fleet was to advance to sea area from west to north of Nauru and decoy the enemy fleet. Then, after 36 land based attack planes from Rabaul had carried out attacks on the enemy, it (2d Fleet) was to move up to Mille area and continue operations.
>
> 3. If necessary, a destroyer squadron was to come up from the Rabaul area and participate in the operations.
>
> 4. Planes of 3d Fleet were undergoing training, but even those elements, of a low degree of training were to join in these operations depending on the enemy's attack.[81]

JAPANESE REACTIONS—GALVANIC

One description of Japanese reaction reads:

> . . . In November, as Bougainville landing operations commenced, [Admiral] Koga was forced to send his air strength to Rabaul. As it turned out, practically all of them were lost at Rabaul and Bougainville. Consequently, the Fleet air strength was almost completely lost, and although the Gilbert's fight appeared to be the last chance for a decisive [Fleet] fight, the fact that the Fleet's air strength had been so badly depleted, enabled us to send only

[81] USSBS, *The Campaigns of the Pacific War*, p. 200.

very small air support to Tarawa and Makin. The almost complete loss of carrier planes was a mortal blow to the Fleet, since it would require six months for replacement.[82]

The Chief of Staff of the Japanese Fourth Fleet stated in regard to the Fourth Fleet:

> Two days prior to your initial attacks on the Gilberts, an attack in the general area was anticipated. The headquarters of the Fourth Fleet was moved to Kwajalein by air on 19 November. It was also planned to bring troops from Truk to the area for reinforcement, using three cruisers and two destroyers. It was also planned to bring reinforcement aircraft into the area from Rabaul and Truk. . . . We [the Staff] flew to Kwajalein and based ashore. . . . On 18 November, the cruisers *Naka, Isuzu* and *Nagara* and four unidentified destroyers left Truk. The *Nagara* and *Isuzu* plus two destroyers were carrying troops to Mille. The *Naka* and remaining two destroyers were carrying Army troops to Kwajalein. . . .
>
> Units of the Second Fleet arrived Kwajalein on 22 November. A conference was held between the Commander in Chief Second and Fourth Fleets to discuss the situation then developing in the Gilbert Islands. . . . However, since there were no aircraft groups available for the carriers, the use of this force was not possible.[83]

The Senior Staff Officer of Commander Second Fleet, Captain Tsuneo Shiki, stated that:

> It was our purpose to assist in repelling your invasion of the Gilberts by attacking a portion of your fleet if our air squadrons had successfully beaten off your air force, and to bombard your positions in the Gilberts, if possible.[84]

In connection with why the Expeditionary Force had not been sighted sooner, a Japanese naval pilot reported that the Japanese had discontinued full coverage by scouting planes of the approaches to the Marshall-Gilbert Islands after the 5 October attack on Wake. This was due to low aircraft strength.[85]

TIMING OF GALVANIC

It has been suggested that GALVANIC should have been postponed until the next full moon to take advantage of higher tides. The problem in

[82] USSBS *Interrogations of Japanese Officials,* USSBS No. 503, Vol. II, p. 516 (Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN).

[83] USSBS Interrogation No. 445, Vol. II, p. 411.

[84] USSBS Interrogation No. 396, Vol. II, p. 360.

[85] USSBS Interrogation No. 123, Vol. I, p. 132.

this connection for the working beavers of the Fifth Amphibious Force involved the impossibility of complying with the directive of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to undertake the Marshall Islands operation in January, 1944 if the Gilbert Islands operation was not over and done well before the end of November, 1943.

We learned after the war that there was a definite advantage in our not delaying the GALVANIC Operation until the next full moon. From interrogation of senior Japanese naval officers in October 1945, it was learned:

> There was a plan in existence to reinforce the garrison strength of Makin by transporting about 1500 Army troops to that island. The troops were loaded on the 4th Fleet's *Nagara, Isuzu* and 2 destroyers which departed Truk about 19 November. Due, however, to the commencement of strikes on the Gilberts by United States carrier task forces, the troops were eventually diverted to reinforcement of the Marshalls, although the possibility of making counter landings on Makin had once been under consideration. The ships arrived at Mille about the 22nd or 23rd and landed the troops there.[86]

THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF THE TRANSPORT SKIPPERS

A glance at the amphibious rosters for GALVANIC reveals that nine senior officers from the Naval Reserve were exercising command among the 21 transports in the Attack Force. These very capable officers mostly came from the Merchant Marine Reserve and were well accustomed to doing a job at sea. This is not to say that they all were accustomed to the Navy style of doing things.

Their presence introduced a few problems which, when they had been eased, caused Commander, Transport Group to remark in his official GALVANIC Report:

> The only comment seems to be that Commanding Officers in general expected Commander Transport Group to 'seal, sign and deliver' boats, crews and personnel to them without any special effort on their own part being necessary. It is believed they know better now.[87]

This heretic philosophy sounded a bit like RKT himself.

[86] USSBS *Pacific Campaigns*, p. 201.

[87] CTG 53.1 GALVANIC Report, 1 Dec. 1943, para 9(e).

WHY TARAWA?

The Marshall Islands lay squarely across the line of communications from the Hawaiian Islands to the Philippines. Some or all of the Marshalls had to be taken to cover or clear this line of approach to the far Western Pacific.

To take the main bastions of Japanese strength in the Marshalls we had to have airfields to provide (a) extensive and regular reconnaissance by land planes of the sea areas covering the approaches to this island group, (b) regular integrated photo intelligence of the islands themselves, (c) shore-based air bombardment groups to destroy Japanese island air resources and reduce defensive strength.

Our closest held islands to the Marshalls in the spring of 1943 were Funafuti in the Ellice Islands, 1,300 miles distant from Kwajalein. This gap was reduced during the late summer of 1943 to a little over 1,000 miles after occupation and building of air bases on Nanomea Atoll in the northern Ellice Islands and isolated Baker Atoll, 365 miles northwest of Canton Island.

Based on the speed and range of the 1943 aircraft, and the limited facilities which could be placed on the scanty land areas of these atolls, these distances were just too great to permit the extensive reconnaissance requirements to be met by land-based air. Naval air could not be substituted for land-based air because, as Fleet Admiral Nimitz later said:

> In the fall of 1943 the Navy lacked the carrier strength to provide the necessary air power.[88]

Admiral Turner in one of his very few post retirement public statements in regard to a controversial matter said:

> The story of Tarawa began before Pearl Harbor, when I was Plans Officer in the Navy Department. . . .
>
> When the decision was made in the spring of 1943 to advance through the Central Pacific islands, there were several points of view as to the best strategic approach. One was to go from New Ireland to Truk, another to come down through Wake to Kwajalein, and a third plan, which was adopted, to go up through the Gilberts toward the Marshall Islands in order to broaden our base and to employ these various atolls, for mutual defense and for attack points on the Marshalls.
>
> We have to remember that at that time, the Japanese Fleet was at least as strong as our own. We needed bases.

[88] Fleet Admiral Nimitz' statement to United Press, 16 Nov. 1948.

> I believed that the decision was sound although at the time I favored going from Rabaul to Truk, rather than through the Gilberts to the Marshalls. However, the possession of Rabaul was essential to any such plan, and as we know now—and as Admiral Nimitz believed then—capture of Rabaul would have been an exceedingly difficult and costly operation, to say nothing of Truk. . . . The Gilbert Islands were the natural and obvious road into the eastern part of the Japanese Empire.[89]

Vice Admiral Spruance was an early advocate of taking the Gilberts. He

> argued strongly that photo intelligence of the Marshalls was necessary and that it could not be obtained unless reconnaissance planes could fly from fields in the Gilberts.[90]

Fleet Admiral King stated his belief in the matter in these few words:

> Their location [Gilbert Islands] was of great strategic significance, because they lay north and west of islands in the possession of the United States and immediately south and east of major Japanese bases in the Caroline and Marshall Islands. Consequently the capture of the Gilberts was a desirable step in any serious advance against the Japanese Empire.[91]

A French naval writer covering the war from the Japanese point of view has said:

> For [the Japanese] Tarawa was the natural staging base to the Fiji and Samoan Islands, and although the need for its capture was not too apparent in November 1943, its possession by the United States was the final link in the denial of the South Pacific to Japan.[92]

From the perspective of more than 25 years after the event, it can be said that seizing the Gilberts had these positive benefits:

1. The seizure made the South Pacific bases, which had been a worry bone for Admiral King since 7 December 1941, more secure.
2. The seizure made possible a shortening of the seaborne logistic support line to the Solomons and Australia by permitting a more direct route from Pearl Harbor to those areas.
3. The seizure made available dispersed land-based air sites to make possible the regular reconnaissance and effective (continuous) bombing of the Japanese-held Marshalls.
4. The seizure cracked open the southeastern door to carrier air raids on the Pearl of the Carolines, Truk.

[89] *Monterey Tribune,* 17 November 1948.
[90] Forrestel, *Spruance,* p. 91.
[91] *King's Record,* pp. 495–96. Reprinted by permission of W.W. Norton & Co., Inc.
[92] Andrieu d'Albas, *Death of a Navy,* p. 277.

The question of "Why Tarawa" can be answered in three words:

"It was necessary."

In the immediate post-battle period, the Commanding General Fifth Amphibious Corps indicated some pleasure with the manner in which the Gilberts had been taken. On 11 January 1944, he wrote:

> The very closest of cooperation between Army, Navy and Marine Corps was necessary to make the operation, the success that it was. This cooperation existed throughout the planning as well as the operational phases of GALVANIC.[93]

WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE

General H. M. Smith's statement that "Tarawa was a mistake" was no more a far out statement than General of the Army Eisenhower's statement:

> An amphibious landing is not a particularly difficult thing.[94]

General Smith's statement, however, was more closely associated with death and dying. So the parents of some grasped at the statement as though it were a club to beat down those who had planned and carried out the operation.

THE GOOD AND BAD DIVIDENDS

While CINCPAC reported to COMINCH that "casualties were somewhat less than had been expected," [95] the shocking news to those in the Navy and Marine Corps who had not planned in detail the operation and visualized the strong Japanese defenses was that the Naval officers killed in action off Makin and Tarawa amounted to 62 and the Marine officers dead at Tarawa numbered 58. The Marine enlisted dead at Tarawa numbered 922, while the Navy's enlisted killed in action off Makin and Tarawa were 74 percent of that total (684). This included 591 from the *Liscome Bay,* 39 from the *Mississippi,* 27 ashore at Tarawa, and 17 in the *Independence.* The other 14 were killed in landing craft or in air action with the enemy.

[93] COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS Final Report on GALVANIC, 11 Jan. 1944.
[94] *U.S. News and World Report,* 3 Feb. 1950.
[95] CINCPAC to COMINCH, 080703 Dec. 1943.

The good dividend, according to General Fuller, the famous English historian, was that the GALVANIC operations:

> Misled the Japanese into believing that the enemy's intention was to make his main thrust toward the Solomons and New Guinea in support of the Rabaul campaign.[96]

At least it definitely laid to rest the Japanese plans to use Mille Atoll in the Marshalls as a staging area in the campaign they planned against the Ellice, Fiji, and Samoan Islands.[97]

By the end of December 1943, the total number of our military and naval personnel present on Tarawa Atoll was 11,567. The old Japanese airstrips on Betio had become operational for fighters on 1 December. Japanese raids against Tarawa Atoll, and in particular against Betio, came in almost nightly during December. Despite this, *Mullinix Field,* named after Rear Admiral Henry M. Mullinix who had gone down with the *Liscome Bay,* was brought to completion on Buota Island. Bombing of the Marshalls started in earnest from Hawkins Field on Betio and Mullinix Field on Buota. It became a daily occurrence.

THE GORY GLORY

Rear Admiral Turner's victory despatch to Rear Admiral Hill and his Task Force 53 read as follows:

> To the officers and men of all Services of Task Force Fifty Three. I offer my heartiest congratulations and commendations for the splendid victory over a tough enemy and tough material obstacles. We are all thoroughly proud of you. R. K. Turner.

It was Admiral Nimitz's December 1943 opinion that:

> The most powerful naval force ever assembled under one Flag was employed in GALVANIC. Many units were newly commissioned and only a very short time could be alloted to training and rehearsal. The fact that the operation was carried out according to plan reflects credit on Commander Central Pacific and officers and men under his command.[98]

To many who fought through the campaigns of the Central Pacific and on north to Japan, GALVANIC was the foundation and the portend of the future. Others thought of the masterly way the blow was struck, the grimness of the task, and the incomparable courage of the men who struck it.

[96] John F. C. Fuller, *The Second World War, 1938–45, A Strategical and Tactical History* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1949), p. 205.

[97] USSBS, *The American Campaign against Wotje, Maloelap, Mille and Jaluit,* p. 18.

[98] CINCPAC GALVANIC Operations, 31 Dec. 1943, para 9.

CHAPTER XIX

At Long Last "The Perfect One" The Marshalls

By middle January 1944, amphibious operations in the Pacific had come a long way. Each Service was learning well its job. To keep everybody in the groove, Admiral Nimitz issued this order:

CINCPAC File — A3 Organization S6667

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AND PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS
Headquarters of the Commander in Chief

Pac-1-Fn
P17–1

Serial 0011 — 15 January 1944

From: Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
To: All Flag, and Marine General Officers, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Unity of Command.

References: (a) Joint Action of the Army and Navy, 1935.
(b) CominCh and CNO dispatch No. 3.

1. The intricate nature of Joint operations, particularly amphibious ones, to be carried on makes it necessary that there exists a thorough understanding of the principles under which coordination of operations of the Army and Navy is to be effected. Both addressees and their appropriate subordinates will be held responsible for adherence to these fundamental precepts. Accordingly, it is desired that the following extracts from references (a) and (b) be brought immediately to the attention of all officers concerned in Joint operations:

From reference (a), Chapter II, paragraph 10:

a. Subject to the provisions of subparagraph *b* below, unity of command in an operation vests in one commander the responsibility and authority to coordinate the operations of the participating forces of both Services by the organization of task forces, the assignment of missions, the designation of objectives, and the exercise of such coordinating control as he deems necessary to insure the success of the operation.

b. *Unity of command does not authorize the commander exercising it to control the administration and discipline of the forces of the*

Service to which he does not belong, nor to issue any instructions to such forces beyond those necessary for effective coordination.

d. Unity of command empowers the commander to coordinate the operations of the forces of both Services assigned to his command, by the organization of task forces, the assignment of missions, the designation of objectives, and the provision of logistic support; and to exercise such control during the progress of the operations as will insure the most effective effort toward the accomplishment of the common mission.

e. Unity of command does not contemplate the issue by the commander of instructions as to dispositions for, or methods of, operation in the accomplishment of missions assigned solely to forces of the Service to which the commander does not belong, nor control of the administration, discipline, or technique of the operations of such forces.

f. The appointment of a commander authorized to exercise unity of command carries with it the power further to delegate this authority, whenever in the opinion of such commander such action is necessary. When this is the case, such commander will determine which Service has paramount interest in subordinate Joint operations under his control and will appoint a subordinate commander, either Army or Navy, to exercise unity of command or limited unity of command over task forces organized for the purpose of conducting the subordinate Joint operations.

From reference (b):

Numerous instances have been brought to my notice where Naval commanders of Joint forces have prescribed the 'How' as well as the 'what' for detachments (large and small) of other Services. Where this has occurred, it has been done in violation of sound principles of command, Joint agreement and, I may add, at variance with the well known convictions of CominCh.

2. I require Naval commanders of all Joint forces to see to it that not only detachments (large and small) of other Services whether Army or Marine Corps, but Navy as well, are left free to accomplish assigned tasks by the use of their own technique as developed by precept and experience, that is, prescribe the 'what,' 'where,' and 'when' unhampered by the 'how.'

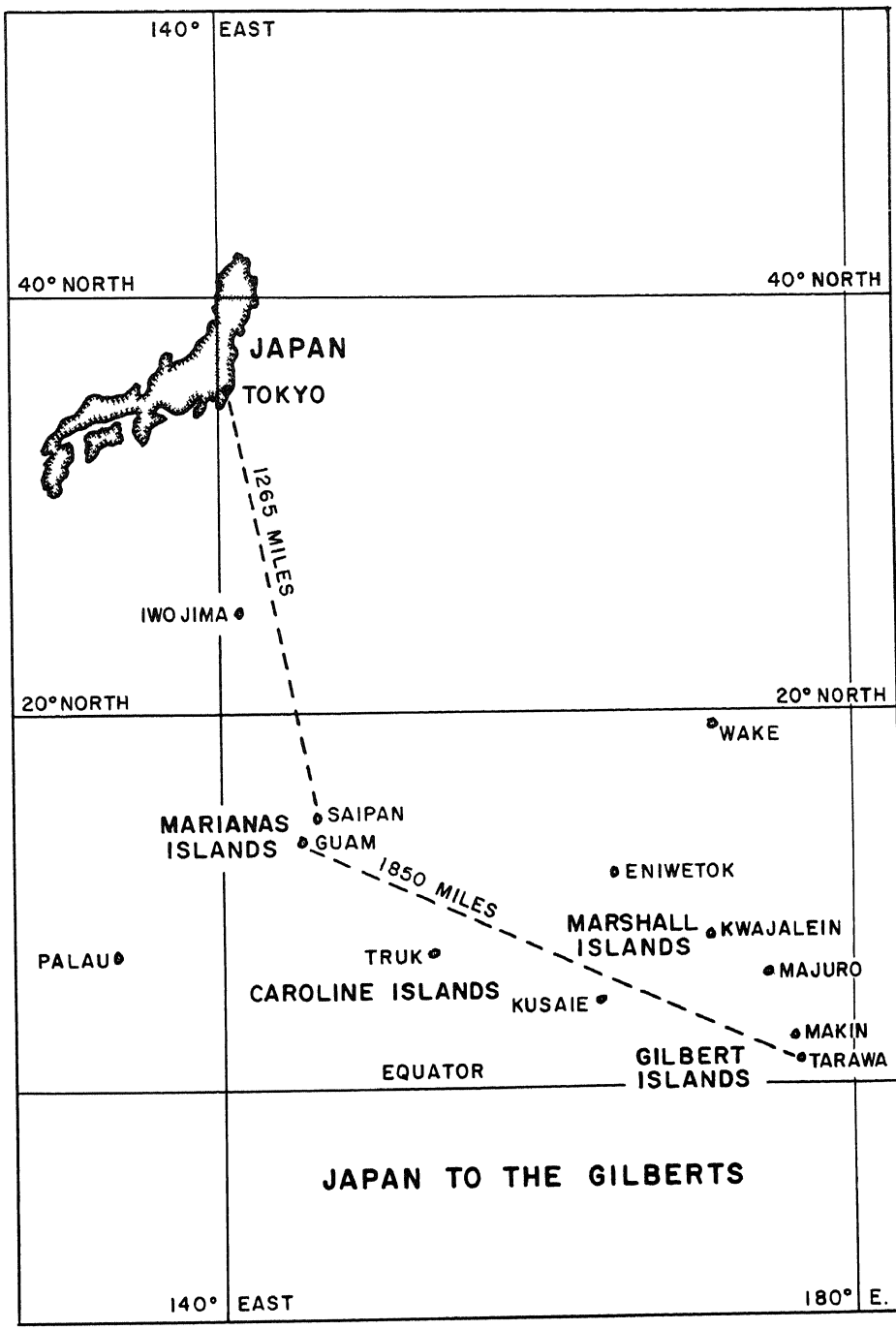
C. W. NIMITZ

Copy to:
CominCh
ComGenCenPac

P. V. MERCER
Flag Secretary

THE BASIC PREMISE

One of the most valuable traits of Richmond Kelly Turner as a war commander was his insistence not only on winning the war, but winning



Japan to the Gilberts.

it with the minimum loss of life. This was mentioned publicly by him prior to Tarawa only as a pronounced desire not to see Marines or soldiers swim, but it was well remembered thereafter by his seniors in connection with his conduct of subsequent amphibious operations of the Pacific War.[1]

Or as one much younger officer put it:

> He bore the tremendous burden of being responsible for the lives of thousands. He took this responsibility personally.[2]

FLINTLOCK

The Marshall Islands Operation started out with the general code name BANKRATE, but the first actual amphibious operation carried out in the Marshalls was called FLINTLOCK.

THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE RIGHT TIME

This was the first amphibious operation in the Pacific where the strongly expressed beliefs of Richmond Kelly Turner were observed in regard to the people who were called upon to plan and to conduct such an operation.

As Rear Admiral Turner wrote to Admiral Nimitz, and as actually accomplished for FLINTLOCK:

> It cannot be too strongly urged that responsible commanders, and their staffs be appointed as far in advance of operations as possible, in order that they may have time to familiarize themselves with the problem on hand, to get acquainted with their force and with each other, and to be prepared to offer advice to their superior commanders. In military operations the promotion of morale and mutual confidence is greatly dependent on personal contacts of this character.[3]

THE FLINTLOCK PLANNING PHASE

As early as 20 July 1943, Admiral King had set the target date for the Marshall Islands operation as 1 January 1944.[4] All proposed plans for this

[1] (a) Driscoll, *Pacific Victory*, p. 55; (b) Nimitz, Spruance; (c) Smith, *Coral and Brass*, p. 145.

[2] Interview with Rear Admiral Draper L. Kauffman, USN, Superintendent of the Naval Academy, 9 Dec. 1965. Hereafter Kauffman.

[3] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to CINCPAC, letter, ESA/A16-3/Ser 00165 of 4 Dec. 1943.

[4] (a) COMINCH to CINCPAC, 202204 Jul. 1943; (b) JCS 386, memo by JSSC, "Strategy of the Pacific, 28 Jun. 1943, CCS 381 Pacific Ocean Area (6-10-43), sec. 1.

operation originating in Admiral Nimitz's Headquarters during the summer and fall of 1943 were of a tentative nature, because it was felt that photographic reconnaissance of the Marshalls was incomplete. However, in general, these early plans called for simultaneous initial seizure of the key islands in the Kwajalein, Wotje and Maloelap Atolls, followed by occupation of other islands in these atolls and a later movement to seize or control Wake, Eniwetok and Kusaie Atolls. Kusaie Atoll was roughly 330 miles southwest of Kwajalein and Eniwetok was 330 miles northwest of Kwajalein.[5] Wake was 600 miles north of Kwajalein.

At this stage of planning, all plans for seizing the Marshall Islands were contingent upon success in the Gilberts and, as a practical matter, if not by orders from on high, depended on adequate availability of amphibious shipping in the Central Pacific.

On 4 November 1943, COMINCH informed CINCPAC that the Joint Chiefs desired Dog Dog for FLINTLOCK to be as early in January 1944 as possible and no later than 31 January. This last day in January turned out to be the earliest that the operation actually could be carried out, although CINCPAC initially and hopefully picked 17 January 1944.[6]

On 17 November 1943, three days before the landings for GALVANIC had commenced, Rear Admiral Turner wrote:

> FLINTLOCK date is January 17th, and it is going to be tough to meet.[7]

Not only was the date tough to meet—but also tough was the decision as to how the Marshalls should be taken.

As early as 12 October 1943, CINCPOA had issued his first broad plan (16–43), indicating "with what" and "when" but not the specific "where" in the Marshalls our efforts would be directed. The plan ran to a tidy 183 pages, and assigned 172 ships and 108 large landing craft to the chore. The task assigned to the Central Pacific Force, which included the amphibians, was to secure control of the Marshalls by capturing, occupying, defending and developing bases therein. CINCPOA indicated that the specific atoll objectives would be named in a later directive, but extensive "Base Develop-

[5] (a) CINCPAC to COMINCH, letter. Ser. 00151 of 20 Aug. 1943, subj: The Seizure of the Marshall Islands; (b) JCS to CINCPAC, 012115 Sep 1943; (c) C/S U. S. Army Memorandum, 6 Sep. 1943, subj: Pacific Operating and Availability of Shipping; (d) JPS Memo same subject, 23 Sep. 1943.

[6] (a) CINCPAC to JCS, 260439 Sep 1943; (b) COMINCH to CINCPOA, 042125 Nov. 1943; (c) CINCPAC to COMCENPACFOR, 090240 Nov. 1943; (d) CINCPOA to COMCENPACFOR, 210221 Dec. 1943.

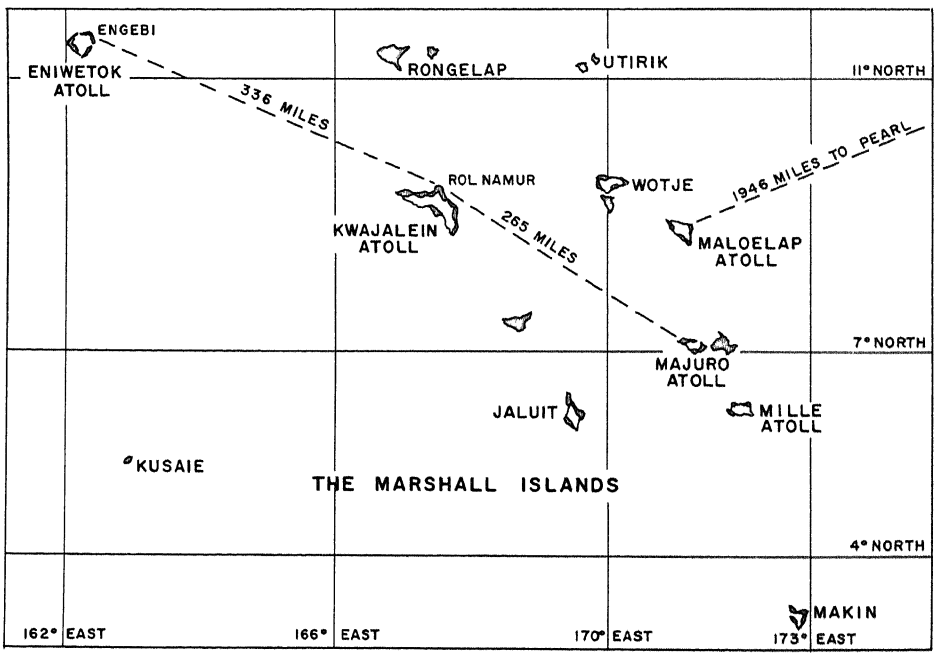
[7] RKT to HWH, letter, 17 Nov. 1943.

ment Plans" were appended for Kwajalein Island and Roi Island in Kwajalein Atoll, Wotje Island in Wotje Atoll, and Taroa Island, the latter in Maloelap Atoll. Presumably the "where" in the Marshalls would be found among these four named islands. All during the latter stages of GALVANIC, the pros and cons of various combinations of the above four objectives were discussed by those who would do the fighting.

"THE WHERE" IN THE MARSHALLS

In the early days of December, 1943, as Rear Admiral Turner was wending his way back to Pearl Harbor in the old Fleet flagship *Pennsylvania,* the planners and operators were still kicking around the delicate details of how the specific objectives of CINCPAC's plans, when named, would be captured.

Every planner worth his salt, and this well included Richmond Kelly Turner, had a plan. Before the *Pennsylvania* arrived back at Pearl, Rear Admiral Turner had his paper, "Lessons learned at Tarawa," and his "BANKRATE Plan" for the Marshalls operation flown in for CINCPAC



The Marshall Islands.

and his planning staff to read and digest in advance of the important conferences to finally decide the "where, when and with what" for FLINTLOCK.

Before Rear Admiral Turner left the Gilberts, he had sent an early draft of his plan for taking the Marshall Islands to Vice Admiral Spruance. On 2 December 1943 Vice Admiral Spruance sent him a despatch saying that the plan was a fine, realistic one—and that he should "go to it" to whip up a more polished plan prior to his arrival back at Pearl.[8]

In 1948, Admiral Turner wrote to Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill his recollections of this phase of the planning for FLINTLOCK as follows:

> On November 30 [1943], in the *Pennsylvania* I left Makin and arrived Pearl about the 5th or 6th of December. . . . Enroute to Pearl, I prepared my report [on GALVANIC], and a rough outline for the Marshall's Operation, entirely on my own. . . . Admiral Nimitz had not then indicated the main features of his plan. Consequently, in the early part of December, it was necessary to coordinate the various ideas put forth. For this purpose, besides staff consultations, Admiral Nimitz held several conferences.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Smith's [Major General Holland M.] idea was, as I recall it, to capture Wotje and Maloelap, and then retire to Hawaii for refit. Mine (which *nobody* seemed to like) was to capture Wotje and Maloelap to refit there, and then go on to Kwajalein, much as we finally did to Eniwetok.
>
> Time being so short, naturally you and Conolly and my Staff were required to study, in a preliminary way, everything in sight including Jaluit and Mille. From the first, Admiral Nimitz was firm for Kwajalein, and as it turned out, that was the best plan.
>
> The fact that there were differences of ideas at the start is not remarkable. What was a good sign was the rapidity with which differences were ironed out and preparations made.[9]

When Vice Admiral Spruance arrived in Pearl from the Gilberts on 11 December 1943, six days after Rear Admiral Turner, the revised CINCPAC plan (dated 14 December 1943) for the Marshalls was just about to be issued. This plan called for the simultaneous capture of

> an advanced Fleet anchorage and two enemy air bases; specific objectives to be designated by a separate directive.

Rear Admiral Turner argued against the general thesis of this second

[8] COMCENPACFOR to COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, 020440 Dec. 1943.

[9] RKT to HWH, letter, 28 Nov. 1948. *Pennsylvania* arrived Pearl 5 December 1943. See also COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS, Ser 00164 of 5 Dec. 1943, subj: Strategic Plan for FLINTLOCK Operation.

draft of the CINCPOA plan, saying that there were not enough amphibious troops and immediate logistic support means available in the Pacific Fleet to conduct three simultaneous and full-blown amphibious assaults against tough Japanese defenses. Upon arrival in Pearl from GALVANIC, Vice Admiral Spruance supported this point of view, as did Major General Holland Smith. The decision not to try to conduct three simultaneous large-scale amphibious assaults was then made by Admiral Nimitz.

Once this decision was taken, then the question was, against which objectives should the two amphibious assaults in the Marshalls be directed. There was considerable sentiment for starting at the eastern edge of the Marshalls and working on into the center of the island group in separate operations. There were many who believed that any atolls we spent lives and efforts taking ought to provide us with (a) a good bomber strip and (b) a good anchorage area. One of the arguments advanced in favor of assaulting Wotje and Maloelap was that they each had a good bomber strip. Admiral Nimitz favored going to the heart of the Marshalls and making an assault on Kwajalein Atoll. He pointed out that the latest photographs taken of Kwajalein on 4 December 1943 by carrier aircraft from Task Force 50 showed that the Japanese were building an airstrip suitable for bombers on Kwajalein Island, at the southern end of the atoll, and that the atoll provided a wonderful harbor.

The main reason advanced for not initially going right to the heart of the Marshalls was the concern that once the mobile air power of the Pacific Fleet was removed from the Marshall Islands area, the Japanese would stage their land-based air power down the stepping stones of the Marianas and the Carolines to Eniwetok, Ponape, Mille, Wotje and Maloelap. This air power would make mincemeat of our logistic support shipping moving into Kwajalein during the period we were trying to rehabilitate the Japanese air bases on Kwajalein and get them into use. The Commander in Chief Pacific Ocean Area could not tarry in the Marshalls because he was under JCS orders to support the operations planned for the seizure of New Ireland and the Admiralty Islands in the Southwest Pacific in February 1944.[10]

Admiral Spruance recalled:

> The schedule of operations set up by the JCS called for the Pacific Fleet, after the capture of Kwajalein, to leave the Marshalls and proceed to the South

[10] (a) COMSOPAC to CINCPAC, 120452 Oct. 1943; (b) CINCPAC to COMINCH, 260519 Oct.; (c) COMINCH to CINCPOA, 242123 Dec. 1943; (d) CINCPAC to COMINCH, 262130 Dec. 1943; (e) COMCENPACFOR Memo for CINCPAC, 27 Dec. 1943, subj: Summary of Plans for FLINTLOCK.

Pacific, in order to support an operation under Admiral Halsey. Under these conditions, I argued as strongly as I could with Admiral Nimitz against Kwajalein, proposing instead Wotje and Maloelap. My argument was based, not on any anticipated difficulty in taking Kwajalein rather than Wotje and Maloelap, but on the insecurity of our line of communications into Kwajalein after the withdrawal of the Pacific Fleet. . . . In my arguments I was supported by Admiral Turner and General Holland Smith, but I was overruled by Admiral Nimitz.[11]

THE VITAL CONFERENCE

Admiral Spruance's biographer describes this dramatic event as follows:

The overruling took place at a conference of all of the available high command of the Pacific Fleet, called by Admiral Nimitz to discuss the specific next objective. After full discussion, the participants voted unanimously to take some other islands before assaulting Kwajalein. What proved to be one of the great decisions of the war was made when Admiral Nimitz, in his calm voice then said, 'Well gentlemen, our next objective will be Kwajalein.' [12]

Fleet Admiral Nimitz recalled this fateful decision-making conference as follows:

My only difference of opinion with Kelly Turner was in connection with the operation for seizing the Marshall Islands. By that time my War Plans Officer was Forrest Sherman.

I listened to the tentative ideas of various officers. Kelly's plan was to start at the fringes and work in. The other plan was to go right in and grab Kwajalein and then pay attention to other fringe islands.

When I made the decision we would take Kwajalein first, I was told by Kelly that it was dangerous and reckless. He argued and argued and became very determined. He even got Spruance to support this point of view.

I finally told Kelly: 'This is it. If you don't want to do it, the Department will find someone else to do it. Do you want to do it, or not?' He smiled and said: 'Sure I want to do it.' And he did it to a T. That was the only real difference of opinion between Kelly Turner and me.[13]

Just for the record of who recommended what at this conference, Fleet Admiral Nimitz wrote:

While I have no minutes of that conference, I am confident that Vice Admiral Harry Hill's recollections are quite accurate. Those present were

[11] Quoted in Forrestel, *Spruance*, pp. 99, 101.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[13] Nimitz.

unanimously opposed to going into Kwajalein with the exception of myself, Admiral McMorris and Admiral Sherman.[14]

In this manner Kwajalein Atoll became the first objective of our advance into the Marshall Islands.

49 DAYS OF PREPARATION

The bloodying of GALVANIC had largely ended with the blowing apart of the *Liscome Bay* on 24 November 1943, although the tidying up of the logistics kept Rear Admiral Turner in the Gilberts for almost another week.

The operation for the capture of the Marshalls was already on the check-off list with a due date of 17 January. This was only about seven weeks away from the date the GALVANIC transports would arrive back in Pearl.

There was a billowing, surging effort at all levels of command to delineate quickly the real lessons learned in the Gilberts and to do something about them. All of the amphibious force was at school in the weeks between GALVANIC and FLINTLOCK. Rear Admiral Turner on the voyage back from Tarawa wrote his "Recommendations for changes and improvements in tactics, techniques, existing instructions and material," and his senior amphibious subordinate, Rear Admiral Hill, circulated his valuable "Lessons learned at Tarawa."

Before Vice Admiral Spruance and Admiral Nimitz had added their wise judgments to these recommendations and lessons learned, and Admiral Nimitz had issued his 95 paragraph study of the action reports of the GALVANIC Operation, things started cracking all through the Pacific as well as in the Navy Department and its supporting shore establishments.

According to Morison's *History of U.S. Naval Operations in World War II,* Captain James M. Steele, who was the Plans Officer on Admiral Nimitz's Staff, compiled a report entitled "A Hundred Mistakes Made at Tarawa." This bit of fiction first published in 1951 appears also in an official United States Army History published in 1962 where it is blandly stated: "One officer compiled a list of one hundred mistakes made during the operation."[15]

An even hundred is a lot of mistakes, even for a major action. However,

[14] CWN to Professor Jeter A. Isely, letter, 18 Jan. 1949.

[15] (a) Morison, *Aleutians, Gilberts and Marshalls* (Vol. VII), footnote on p. 184; (b) Louis Morton, *Strategy and Command: The First Two Years,* Vol. X of Subseries *The War in the Pacific* in Series UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1962), p. 573.

a tremendous number of lessons were learned at Tarawa and at Makin which stood the Navy and its amphibians in good stead as they moved northwestward from the Gilberts towards the heart of Japan. But, by and large, they were lessons learned because knowledge of how to seize a well defended atoll was increased, not because a chosen few had made ten times ten big raw mistakes at Tarawa or Makin and the mistakes were later corrected. This is not to say that there were not some definite failures in the battle action and in the execution of the art of amphibious warfare, as it was known on 20 November 1943.

Long and tedious personal efforts by the author to locate the document "A Hundred Mistakes Made at Tarawa" in the files of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area, or the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet and of their immediate subordinate commands, or anything resembling it, have been completely unrewarding. Captain Steele says:

> I definitely never prepared such a document or anything resembling it.[16]

Of the many present survivors of this period of the war who were questioned, no one had ever seen such a document nor heard such a document mentioned, except in Morison. This researcher not only doubts its existence; he denies it.

Rear Admiral Turner was not at Tarawa, but he made every effort to learn the details of what had happened there—and to extract therefrom the maximum in sound lessons. In no way was this a lonely effort. Most of the participants realized that there were needful lessons to be learned, and acted accordingly to promptly reduce these to paper and to circulate them widely. There was not much time to learn. The next operation was only weeks away, so everyone was pressing for a period of rapid schooling.

As has been well said:

> One of the more notable features about all of the action reports on Tarawa, Marine and Navy, is the zeal with which the officers . . . picked out the flaws of their performance and sought far-reaching remedies. . . .[17]

FRUITFUL LESSONS

It may be said that between GALVANIC and FLINTLOCK, marked progress was made in six areas of amphibious operations. These were:

[16] Interview with Captain James M. Steele, 21 Feb. 1966. See also New York Times Military Editor (Hanson W. Baldwin) to Director of Naval History, letter, 11 Sep. 1963, and reply of 19 Sep. 1963 and Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill to Chief of Military History, letter, 14 Feb. 1949.

[17] Isely and Crowl, *U. S. Marines and Amphibious Warfare*, pp. 234.

1. Hydrography and underwater defenses of enemy-held beaches.
2. Loading and unloading of shipping.
3. Beach organization.
4. Follow-up shipping.
5. Availability of larger numbers and better LVTs.
6. Gunfire support.

(1) Hydrography and underwater defenses of enemy-held beaches.

In the short six weeks between arriving back from the Gilbert Islands and sailing for the Marshalls, the Underwater Demolition Teams, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet were born and came of age.

As Admiral Turner wrote:

> . . . It was after Tarawa in the Pacific, but before Normandy in Europe, that we recognized the imperative need for a better method . . . that would acquaint us with the true underwater geography between the Line of Departure and the beach, and that would ensure either the removal or the safe avoidance of static dangers.
>
> The method adopted was the employment of swimming scouts—Underwater Demolition Teams. It became the duty of these teams to chart the beach approaches, and to find and destroy underwater obstructions that might prevent or even retard the troop landings.[18]

On 26 December 1943, Rear Admiral Turner recommended to the Chief of Naval Operations that Underwater Demolition Teams be formed on a permanent basis, with six teams assigned to the Central Pacfic and three to the South Pacific. A few days later, he recommended that an "Experimental and Tactical Underwater Demolition Station" be established in the Hawaiian Islands. Both these recommendations met with early approval and prompt implementation.[19]

(2) Loading and unloading of shipping

From the logistical experience gained in GALVANIC and after a discussion during a two-day logistic conference at Pearl Harbor in which Rear Admiral Turner and his Chief of Staff, Captain Theiss, personally partici-

[18] Francis D. Fane and Don Moore, *The Naked Warriors* (New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, 1956), pp. iv-v.

[19] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to CNO, Ser 00383 of 26 Dec. 1943 and Ser 00400 of 29 Dec. 1943.

pated, modified procedures were evolved for determining priorities of support material carried to the objective areas. This applied particularly to follow-up shipping. New organizational arrangements were agreed upon for loading ships in rear areas and unloading ships in the forward areas.[20]

(3) Beach Organization

The unloading of shipping in the Gilberts and elsewhere in the Pacific continued to be hampered by inadequate organization at the beachhead. As a Turner-trained amphibious officer (Wilkinson), who made his own mark in the Pacific described the problem:

> Without adequate organization on the beach, with excess personnel to meet emergencies, the whole operation is imperiled. Needed supplies do not reach the front, are not removed from the beach, may not even be landed, because of congestion and disorder. Transports and cargo vessels are maintained for days in dangerous waters, exposed to enemy air and submarine attack. . . .[21]

Therefore, one of the improvements made after GALVANIC had to do with detailing Beachmasters of adequate rank and ability. As Captain Theiss said:

> If we can get Beachmasters of sufficient rank and experience to handle the problem from the time the transports first arrive and begin to unload, we will be able to cure the unloading difficulties to a very considerable extent. The beach parties as now organized mostly consist of comparatively green personnel, young and inexperienced officers who do not have sufficient authority to be able to get away with anything on the beach—they are probably junior to everybody to whom they are trying to give instructions. A fully qualified Beachmaster arriving initially and taking charge of the entire unloading situation right from the start will be able to control and regulate it to a marked extent.[22]

Beachmasters of the rank of commander became commonplace. In addition, there was further beefing up of the naval contingent of the Shore Party.

Steps also were taken to improve the cargo pallets used in combat loading, although Rear Admiral Turner, as late as 3 January 1944, still believed that:

[20] Stenographic Record of Gilbert Island Logistic Conference 11–12 Dec. 1943; (b) COMPHIBFORPAC Circular Letter 5AL–43 of 23 Dec. 1943, (c) Transport Doctrine Amphibious Forces U.S. Pacific Fleet, 6 Jan. 1944.

[21] COMTHIRDPHIBFOR letter, ser 0013 of 28 Jan. 1944, subj: Shore Party Organization for Amphibious Operations.

[22] Stenographic Record of Gilbert Island Logistic Conference 11–12 Dec. 1943.

> Pallets work well alongside a dock with ample unloading devices but do not work well when they must be dragged across a beach or reef chiefly by manpower.[23]

And the transports reported that if palletized loads were to be the norm, holds and troop magazines of transports needed modification. To illustrate, the *Virgo* was able to carry only 2,200 tons of cargo during the Marshall Island operation "although every cubic foot of space was filled to capacity." This was only 55 percent of her normal cargo capacity.[24]

(4) Follow-up shipping

Five civilian-manned transports and the same number of civilian-manned cargo ships had been employed in GALVANIC to transport assault and garrison elements to the newly captured positions, all arriving within eight days after the assault.

In preparing for FLINTLOCK, Commander Fifth Amphibious Force recommended that urgent steps be taken to remedy the marked deficiencies which this employment had revealed, particularly in such areas as:

1. detailed charts of the island areas.
2. visual signal equipment for intership communication.
3. additional signal and radio naval personnel to be placed on board together with fresh water and galley equipment therefor.
4. cordage and tackle for proper and frequent handling of boats.
5. radio equipment and its power supply.
6. life jackets, additional boats, and additional berthing space to support the naval personnel placed on board the merchant ship to facilitate cruising in formation and responsiveness to unloading problems.[25]

Time permitted all this to be done.

(5) Availability of and armoring of LVTs

There had been about 175 LVTs in GALVANIC of which 100 were of the newer LVT(2) type. Some 70 percent of the 125 LVTs at Tarawa were

[23] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to CINCPAC, letter, 0017 of 3 Jan. 1944, subj: Use of cargo pallets in combat loading and enclosures.

[24] (a) *Monrovia* Action Report, 15 Feb. 1944, p. 8; (b) *Virgo* Action Report, 6 Feb. 1944, 1st Endorsement dated 17 Feb. 1944.

[25] CTF 52 letter, Ser 0131 of 6 Dec. 1943, subj: Organization of Naval detachments and equipping thereof.

left at that island, wrecked or sunk by either gunfire or underwater mines, or rendered useless by mechanical failures. If there were any LVTs lost at Makin, the fact does not appear in the reports of the LSTs who transported them to Makin. Despite this, the overall GALVANIC loss rate of LVTs approached 50 percent. So that loss factor was used for planning for FLINTLOCK.

The reputation of the LVTs was riding high. This was particularly so, since Major General Holland Smith made the following statement at the LVT conference held with the representatives of the Navy Department in December 1943:

> These operations are not possible without LVTs. They are all that made the last one successful. That and the Marines in them.

Since the number of LVTs was in short supply, and plans were being based on a 50 percent loss rate in the next operation, Major General Smith recommended using in FLINTLOCK:

> All LVTs on hand and if nothing is left for the next operation, then at least the first operation will be a success.[26]

The two newest amtrac models, LVT-A1 and LVT-A2, were made available from the United States for use in FLINTLOCK. The LVT-A1 carried a 37-millimeter cannon, and three machine guns, and primarily was a gun support vehicle. The LVT-A2 carried the troops, but the troops and the driver were protected by ¼-inch armor plate.

(6) Close in Gunfire Support

One thing was quite obvious to those in the battleships and cruisers at Tarawa (kept out of the lagoon by shallow water and uncharted, scattered coral heads) and to those in the destroyers which had entered the lagoon only to run aground or to damage sound gear or propellers on these same coral heads. For lagoon landings, their types of ships were quite unsuitable for providing the close gunfire support that the lead assault landing waves needed during the last five minutes before they touched down.

It was also quite obvious in December 1943 that a suitable new type of close gunfire support craft could not be designed and built and delivered before FLINTLOCK. To bridge the gap while a new craft (capable of

[26] LVT Conference Minutes, 17–18 Dec. 1943.

better gunfire support from a gun platform that could move into shallow water along with the amtracs and landing craft) was being obtained from the ship builders, it was decided to try out an existing landing craft, infantry (LCI), after fitting her (piling on) some additional armament. On 14 December 1943 the LCI-345, hastily rearmed, was directed to conduct experimental fire support practices to develop proper techniques and procedures for close in fire support of landing troops. Before sailing for the Marshalls, 24 LCI(L)s were transformed into 24 LCI(FS) with six rocket racks, each firing 72 rockets, three 40-millimeter and two 20-millimeter guns, as well as five 50-caliber machine guns. These "gunboats" packed a terrific wallop for such a small shallow draft craft.

As for gunfire support in general, it was Rear Admiral Turner's opinion from close observation of the pre-landing firing at Makin, that:

> With more care and training, the effectiveness of the bombardment ought to be increased 50 percent.[27]

THE MARSHALL ISLANDS—THE SPECIFIC WHERE

The State of Pennsylvania has an area of about 45,000 square miles and the State of Texas about 267,000 square miles. The 33 atolls and 867 reefs in the Marshall Islands span an area about 600 miles by 650 miles, or nearly 400,000 square miles.[28]

The atolls vary greatly in size but the larger ones cover 200 to 600 square miles. They generally are described as lying in two parallel chains, the "sunrise" or eastern chain of Mille, Majuro, Maloelap, and Wotje, and the "sunset" or western chain of Jaluit, Kwajalein, and Eniwetok.

The islands on the southern and easterly sides of the atolls are generally the larger. Their elevations above sea level vary from four to 15 feet. Many of the islands, in 1944, were thickly wooded with coconut palms and breadfruit trees.

The principal Japanese military installations in the Marshalls were located on islands of atolls as listed below:

[27] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to CINCPAC, letter, Ser 00165 of 4 Dec. 1943.

[28] The Marine Monograph states that the Marshalls span 800 square miles of ocean. Robert D. Heinl, Jr. and John D. Crown, *The Marshalls: Increasing the Tempo* (Washington: Historical Branch, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1954), p. 1.

	Air Base	*Seaplane Base*	*Naval Base*
Eniwetok Atoll	Engebi		
Jaluit Atoll	Emidj		Jaluit
Kwajalein Atoll	Roi-Namur	Ebeye	Kwajalein
(Lagoon—800 square miles)			Bigej
	Kwajalein		Gugegwe
Maloelap Atoll (Lagoon—250 square miles)	Taroa		
Mille Atoll	Mille		
Wotje Atoll (Lagoon—190 square miles)	Otdia	Wotje	Wotje

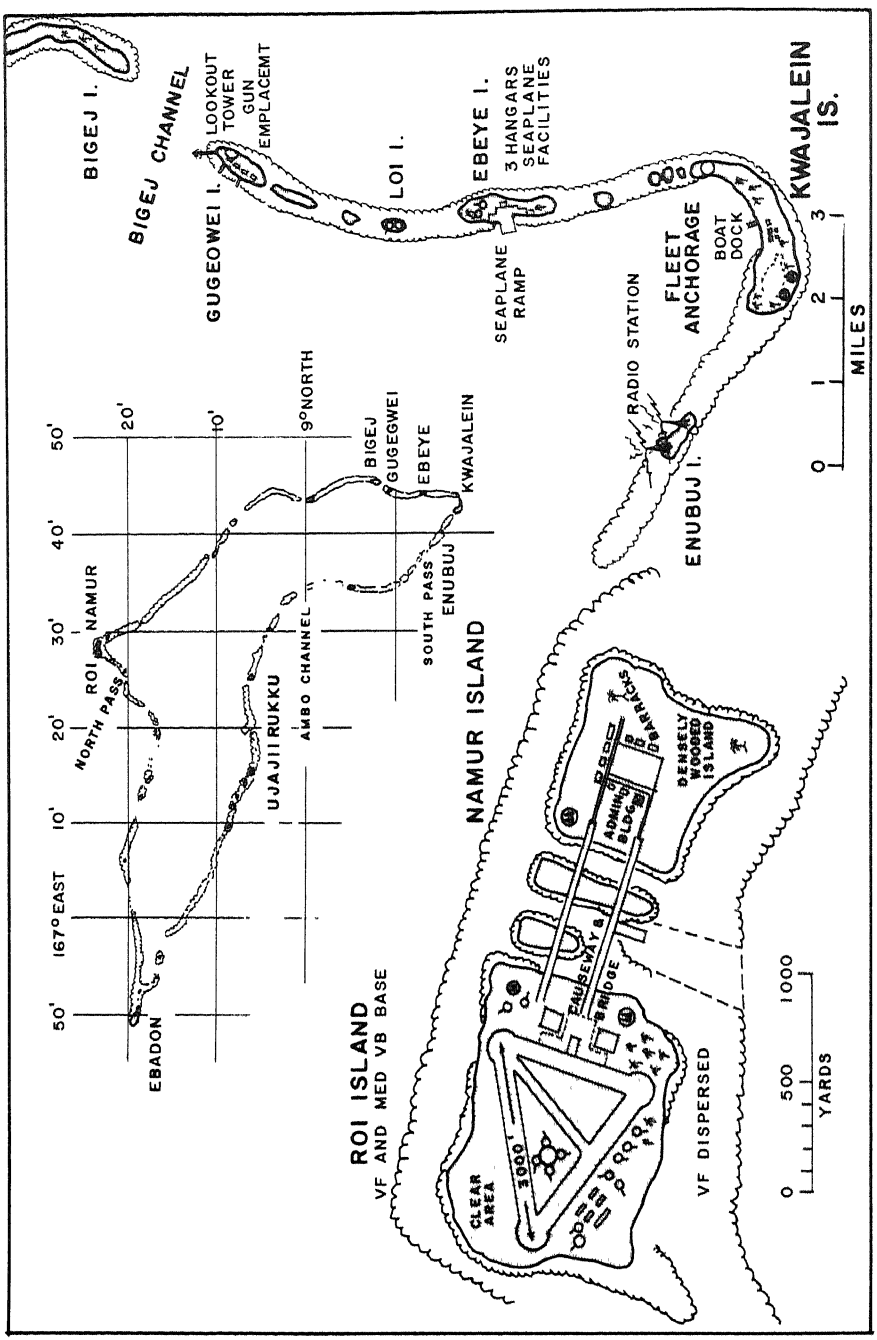
MAJURO ATOLL

Majuro Atoll, 100 miles south of Wotje, is missing from the above list because the Japanese had no important military installations there. This atoll, just 65 miles north from Mille Atoll at the south eastern end of the Marshalls, had a lagoon 21 miles long and up to six miles wide with 90 square miles of lagoon area highly suitable for a Fleet anchorage. Islands around the lagoon were adequate for long airstrips. In 1943, it was agreed generally that planes could be gotten in the air sooner from the battered remains of an airstrip seized from the enemy than from an airstrip built from scratch. Majuro had no airstrip, but it was so positioned under a prospective air umbrella from the Gilberts, that there seemed to be at least a fifty-fifty chance that the contrary might be true in this instance. Particularly, providing its seizure was not discovered by the Japanese at an early date so that the airstrip building might proceed free of enemy air bombing interference. Majuro was added as an objective in FLINTLOCK by Admiral Nimitz, after a recommendation to that effect was made by Vice Admiral Spruance, who credits his Chief of Staff, Captain Charles J. Moore, with the initial idea and the essential urge.[29]

KWAJALEIN ATOLL

Kwajalein lies roughly in the center of the Marshall Islands. The Atoll is 66 miles long in a northwesterly-southeasterly direction and has a greatest

[29] Spruance.



Kwajalein Atoll (Roi-Namur and Kwajalein Island).

width of 18 miles. It is the largest of the atolls in the Marshalls with a generous 80 islands (many covered with a dense growth of coconut palms and smaller vegetation) around its rim, plus some 17 additional wave-swept islets and reefs. Within its 800 square miles of lagoon, reached by six good passages through the reefs, there is a spacious Fleet anchorage with depths from 60 to 140 feet. Roi and Namur Islands at the atoll's northern extremity lie so close together that they were joined both by a narrow sand spit along the southern end and, in 1944, by a causeway and road 300 yards to the north. Roi Island, 1,300 yards long and 800 yards wide, had little but cement on its three-tenths of a square mile surface, for it had on it three paved runways varying from 3,600 to 4,300 feet long, a taxiway, revetments, hangars, repair facilities, and plane service areas. Namur had about 170 air base buildings used for aviation equipment and general stores as well as ammunition dumps and barracks, although in 1944, its eastern half was largely covered with palms and breadfruit trees. Forty-four miles away at the southern end of the atoll, there was the principal Japanese military headquarters in the Marshalls on cucumber-shaped Kwajalein Island. In January 1944, an airstrip was being built on this island which is about three miles long and three miles wide. Just north of Kwajalein Island there was a seaplane base on Ebeye Island.

THE CLIMATE AND WEATHER

Against a background of generally steamy climate with frequent rain, there were good prospects for no more than choppy seas and soaking showers in the Marshalls in February 1944. According to CINCPAC's Intelligence Staff:

> Thunderstorms are fairly common, except in January and February, but gales, often westerly in character, are seldom experienced . . . [in the Northern Marshalls] . . . The seasonal pattern is well more defined with maximum rainfall occurring in months of September, October, November, succeeded by a drier season.[30]

The actual weather on Dog Day, like California weather, was not quite so good as previously publicized, as these official reports indicate:

> During morning light rain showers and squalls with some clearing about

[30] JICPOA Bulletin No. 30–43 "Enemy Positions Marshall-Gilbert Area," Vol. I, 5 May 1943, p. 13.

1000 to 1030. Winds were ENE to NE averaging 18 knots with highest hourly velocity of 25 knots.

* * * * *

About 1300, CTF 52 cancelled all remaining bombing missions for Dog Day due to heavy rains.

* * * * *

On D-day we experienced strong northeast tradewinds in the Transport Area, with frequent and heavy showers and varying degrees of visibility. During the remainder of the period, we had regular northeast trade winds without rain, the best days being Dog Plus 1 and Dog Plus 2.[31]

THE TIDES

For 31 January 1944, it was calculated that low water would occur at Kwajalein Island at 0126 and high water at 0734. On the day of the major assault landings, 1 February 1944, these events were actually at 0218 and 0843, respectively. Normal range of tide was three to five feet with 4.3 feet on January 31st. On 30 January 1944, the new moon was due to rise in the morning at 0942 and set at 2206, well before the first landings were to take place early on 31 January.

The actual temperature range logged at Majuro for February 1944, was from 77° to 88°. This gives a good idea of the general high temperatures experienced during FLINTLOCK for ships in the area of the Marshall Islands.

FLINTLOCK—THE WHEN

Having decided the "where" among the atolls of the Marshalls, for the amphibious assault, the next urgent problem was the "when."

Rear Admiral Turner pointed out in a letter to Vice Admiral Spruance and Admiral Nimitz, that if the date of 17 January was postponed two weeks, the 7th Infantry Division could receive additional amphibious tractors from the States and have available 282 instead of only 90. Since everyone who had participated in GALVANIC was singing the praises of the amtracs, and emphasizing the need for amtracs in generous quantities to make assaults

[31] (a) COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 31 Jan. 1944; (b) COMFIFTHPHIBFOR FLINTLOCK Report, Encl. (A) para 9; (c) CTG 52.5, FLINTLOCK Report, 15 Feb. 1944, p. 2.

over coral reefs, this was a powerful argument. To this was added the advantage of allowing each and every one of the gunfire support ships to receive an opportunity to fire the range at Kahoolawe Island in the Hawaiian Islands, using the techniques developed in the gunfire support art during GALVANIC.[32] Therefore a target date of 1 February 1944 was recommended by Rear Admiral Turner and 31 January 1944 was set by the Powers That Be.

FLINTLOCK—WITH WHAT

As early as August 1943, the 7th Infantry Division which had participated in the Kiska campaign in the Aleutian Islands had been designated by the Joint Chiefs for the Marshall Island campaign. By December 1943, the troops were in Hawaii.

In early September 1943, the Fourth Marine Division, training on the Pacific Coast, was also designated for the Marshalls and their amphibious training on the West Coast expedited. The 22nd Marine Regiment then in Samoa, and the 106th Infantry Regiment in Hawaii, were soon added.[33]

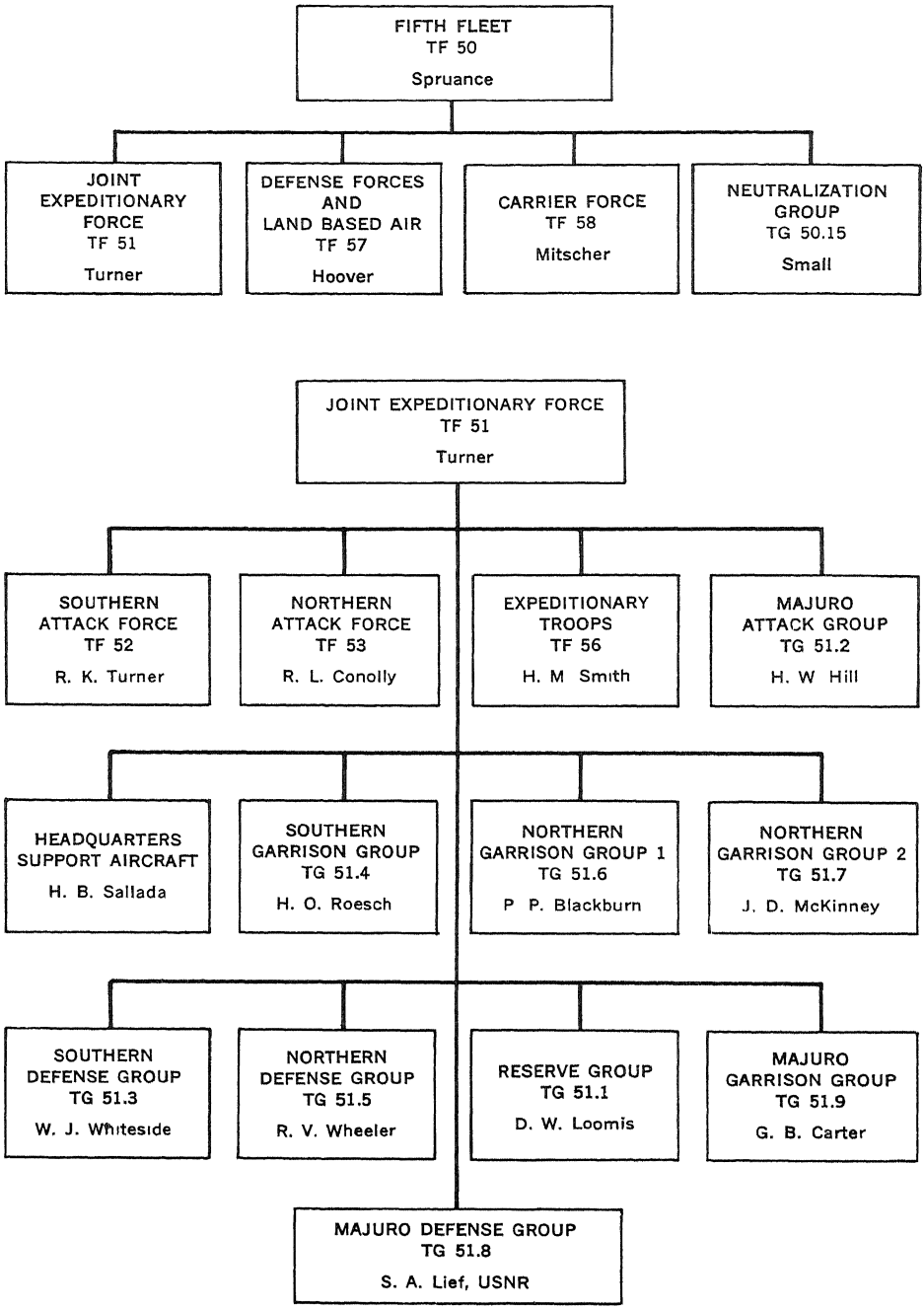
By and large, all the naval ship resources which had been assigned to GALVANIC were made available for FLINTLOCK, with however the important stipulation that much of the Fifth Fleet, less the amphibians, must be sent to the South and Southwest Pacific immediately after the landings to assist Commander Third Fleet and General MacArthur in carrying out JCS approved operations against Kavieng in New Ireland and Manus Island in the Admiralty Islands.

TASK ORGANIZATION—FLINTLOCK

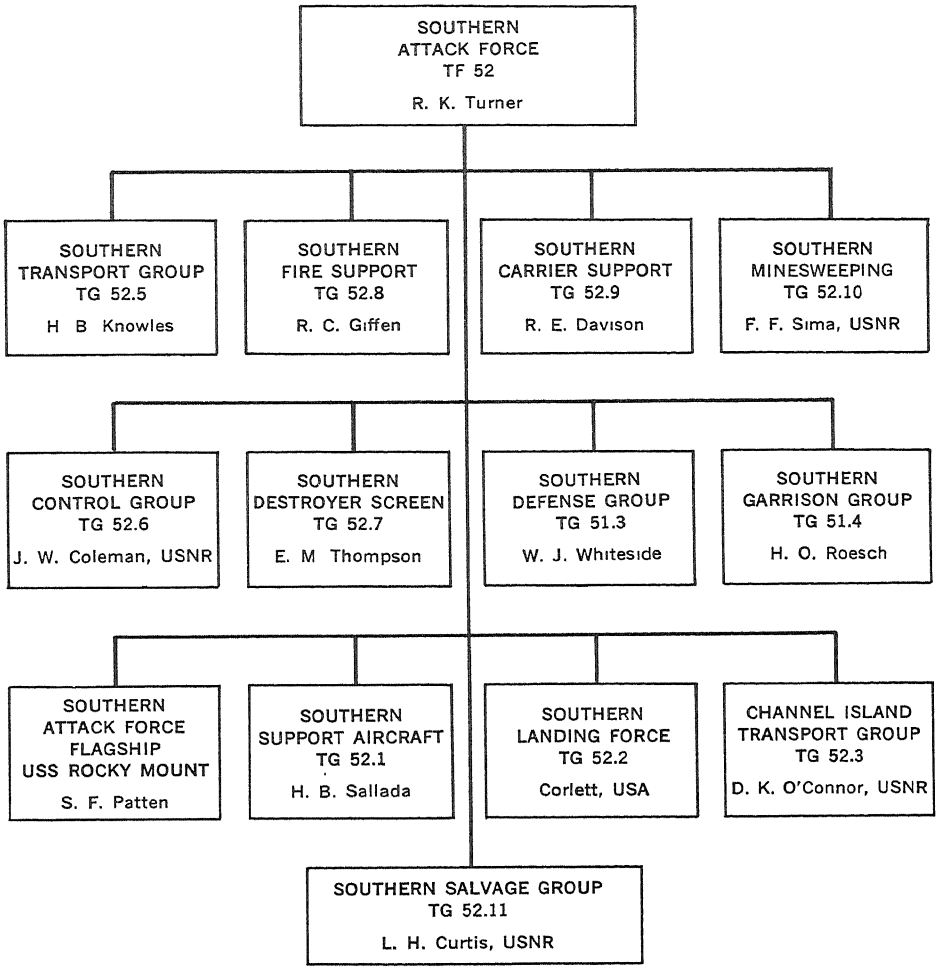
The task organization established for FLINTLOCK was similar to that which had been successful in the Gilberts. Vice Admiral Spruance, however, carried the title Commander Fifth Fleet rather than Commander Central Pacific Force. He commanded TF 50 and Rear Admiral Turner TF 51. Their organizations are shown on the next page.

[32] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to COMCENPACFOR, letter, Ser 00353 of 17 Dec. 1943.

[33] (a) COMINCH to CINCPAC, 21080 Aug. 1943; (b) COMINCH to CINCPAC, 012115 Sep. 1943; (c) CINCPAC to COMPHIBTRAPAC, 210253 Sep. 1943; (d) CINCPOA Joint Staff Study, FLINTLOCK II, Ser 00293 of 20 Dec. 1943.



The Southern Attack Force, which Rear Admiral Turner directly commanded and controlled was organized as shown on the next page.



SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE—TASK FORCE 52

(a) *FORCE FLAGSHIP*
AGC-3 *Rocky Mount* (FF) Captain S. F. Patten (1921)

(b) TG 52.1 SUPPORT AIRCRAFT Captain H. B. Sallada (1917)

(c) *TG 52.2 SOUTHERN LANDING FORCE* Major General C. H. Corlett, USA
(1) Seventh Infantry Division Major General C. H. Corlett, USA
(2) Southern Garrison Force Brigadier General H. D. Gibson, USA
(3) Southern Support Aircraft Colonel G. T. Collar, Army Air Force

(d) *TG 52.3 CHANNEL ISLAND TRANSPORT GROUP* Lieutenant Commander D. K. O'Connor, USNR
APD-23 *Overton* (F) Lieutenant Commander D. K. O'Connor, USNR
APD-1 *Manley* Lieutenant R. T. Newell, USNR

(e) *TG 52.5 SOUTHERN TRANSPORT GROUP* Captain H. B. Knowles (1917)

(1) *TU 52.5.2 TRANSPORT DIVISION SIX* Captain T. B. Brittain (1920)

APA-2 *Harris* (F) Commander A. M. VanEaton (1921)
APA-10 *Harry Lee* Commander J. G. Pomeroy (1921)
APA-43 *Fayette* Commander J. C. Lester (1922)
APA-56 *Leedstown* Commander H. Bye (1921)
AKA-18 *Centaurus* Captain G. E. McCabe, USCG
LSD-6 *Lindenwald* Captain W. H. Weaver, USNR

(2) *TU 52.5.3 TRANSPORT DIVISION EIGHTEEN* Captain H. B. Knowles (1917)

APA-31 (F) *Monrovia* Commander J. D. Kelsey (1923)
APA-11 *Feland* Commander G. M. Jones, USNR
APA-16 *J. Franklin Bell* Captain O. H. Ritchie, USNR
APA-50 *Pierce* Captain A. R. Ponto (1919)
AKA-19 *Thuban* Commander J. C. Campbell, USNR
LSD-2 *Bellegrove* Lieutenant Commander M. Seavey, USNR

(3) *TU 52.5.4 TRACTOR UNIT NO. 2* Commander A. M. Hurst (1924)

LST-31 (GF) Lieutenant J. D. Schneidau, USNR
LST-29 Lieutenant A. M. Jenkins, USNR
LST-41 Lieutenant W. B. Dundon, USNR
LST-127 Lieutenant J. J. Reed, USNR
LST-218 Lieutenant H. O. Powell, USN
LST-240 Lieutenant B. D. Bedichek, USNR
LST-273 Lieutenant (jg) J. F. James, USNR
LST-481 Lieutenant George McGuire, USNR
LST-482 Lieutenant R. L. Eddy, USNR
LCT-935
LCT-936
LCT-943

(f) *TG 52.6 CONTROL GROUP* Lieutenant J. W. Coleman, USNR

SC-1066 Lieutenant (jg) B. M. Hollander, USNR
SC-999 Lieutenant (jg) L. A. Schammel, USNR
SC-539 Lieutenant (jg) C. R. Howell, USNR
LCC-36 (Landing Craft Control)
LCC-38 (Landing Craft Control)

(g) *TU 52.5.1 ADVANCE TRANSPORT UNIT* Captain J. B. McGovern (1921)

(1) *TU 52.5.11 TRANSPORT DIVISION FOUR* Captain J. B. McGovern (1921)

APA-31 (F) *Zeilin* Commander T. B. Fitzpatrick (1919)
APA-49 *Ormsby* Commander J. G. McClaughry (1927)

APA-55 *Windsor* Commander D. C. Woodward, USNR
AP-103 *President Polk* Commander C. J. Ballreich (1920)
AKA-20 *Virgo* Commander C. H. McLaughlin, USNR
LSD-1 *Ashland* Captain C. L. C. Atkeson (1922)

(2) *TU 52.5.12 TRACTOR UNIT NO. 1* Commander R. C. Webb (1924)
LST-242 (F) Lieutenant J. W. Winney, USNR
LST-34 Lieutenant (jg) James J. Davis, USNR
LST-78 Lieutenant C. J. Smits, USNR
LST-224 Lieutenant (jg) C. M. Pugh
LST-226 (FF) Lieutenant N. Zelenko, USNR
LST-243 Lieutenant F. H. Blaske, USNR
LST-246 Lieutenant F. Brayton, USNR
LST-272 Lieutenant J. F. Dore, USNR
LCT-931
LCT-934
LCT-937

(h) *TG 52.7 TRANSPORT SCREEN* Captain E. M. Thompson (1921)

(1) *TU 52.7.1 ADVANCE TRANSPORT SCREEN* Captain E. M. Thompson (1921)
DD-574 (F) *John Rodgers* Commander H. O. Parish (1926)
DD-531 *Hazelwood* Commander V. P. Douw (1930)

(2) *TU 52.7.2 SOUTHERN TRANSPORT SCREEN* Commander Henry Crommelin (1925)
DD-555 (F) *Haggard* Commander D. A. Harris (1930)
DD-554 *Franks* Commander N. A. Lidstone (1930)
DD-501 *Schroeder* Commander J. T. Bowers (1928)
DD-556 *Hailey* Commander P. H. Brady (1930)
DMS-14 *Zane* Lieutenant Commander W. T. Powell, Jr. (1935)
DMS-17 *Perry* Lieutenant I. G. Stubbart (1938)
SC-1068
SC-1033 Lieutenant (jg) D. R. Stevenson, USNR

(i) *TG 52.8 FIRE SUPPORT GROUP* Rear Admiral R. C. Giffen (1907)

(1) *TU 52.8.1 FIRE SUPPORT UNIT ONE* Commander J. J. Greytak (1926)
DD-575 (F) *McKee* Commander J. J. Greytak (1926)
DD-479 *Stevens* Lieutenant Commander W. M. Rakow (1934)

(2) *TU 52.8.2 FIRE SUPPORT UNIT TWO* Rear Admiral R. C. Giffen (1907)
OBB-38 *Pennsylvania* Captain W. A. Corn (1914)
OBB-42 *Idaho* Captain H. D. Clarke (1915)
CA-36 (F) *Minneapolis* Captain R. W. Bates (1915)
CA-32 *New Orleans* Captain S. R. Shumaker (1915)
DD-492 *Bailey* Commander M. T. Munger (1932)

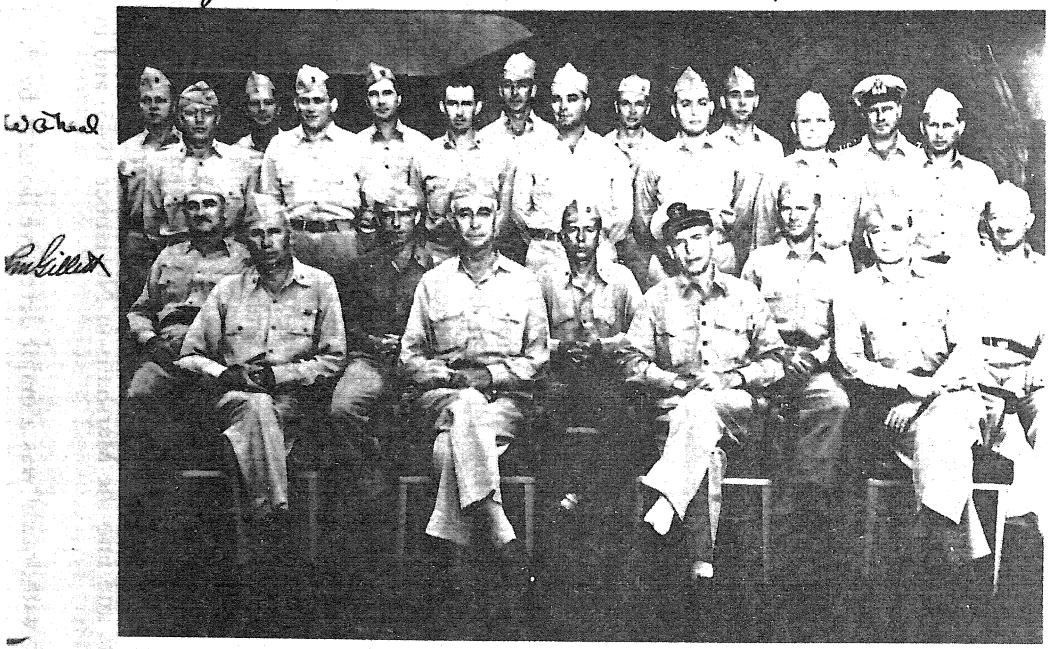
DD-606 *Frazier* Commander E. M. Brown (1931)
DD-583 *Hall* Commander J. F. Delaney (1925)
DD-602 *Meade* Commander J. Munholland (1932)

(3) *TU 52.8.3 FIRE SUPPORT UNIT THREE* Rear Admiral R. M. Griffin (1911)
OBB-40 (F) *New Mexico* Captain E. M. Zacharias (1912)
OBB-41 *Mississippi* Captain L. L. Hunter (1912)
CA-38 *San Francisco* Captain H. E. Oversech (1915)
DD-658 *Colahan* Commander D. T. Wilber (1931)
DD-576 *Murray* Commander P. R. Anderson (1928)
DD-573 *Harrison* Commander C. M. Dalton (1927)

(4) *TU 52.8.4 FIRE SUPPORT UNIT FOUR* Commander Henry Crommelin (1925)
DD-500 (F) *Ringgold* Commander T. F. Conley (1926)
DD-502 *Sigsbee* Commander B. V. M. Russell (1926)

(5) *TU 52.8.8 (LCI G) UNIT* Lieutenant Commander T. Blanchard, USNR
LCI (FS) DIVISION THIRTEEN—Lieutenant Commander J. L. Harlan
LCI(FS)-77 (F) Lieutenant (jg) C. W. Fogg, USNR
LCI(FS)-78 Lieutenant (jg) L. T. Kermon, USNR
LCI(FS)-79 Lieutenant (jg) F. G. Bartlett, USNR
LCI(FS)-80 Lieutenant (jg) A. H. Conners, USNR
LCI(FS)-366 Lieutenant (jg) J. C. Callen, USNR
LCI(FS)-437 Lieutenant (jg) A. C. Sullivan, USNR
LCI(FS) DIVISION FIFTEEN—Lieutenant Commander T. Blanchard, USNR
LCI(FS)-365 (GF) Lieutenant (jg) T. N. Fortson, USNR
LCI(FS)-438 Lieutenant C. C. Ferris, USNR
LCI(FS)-439 Lieutenant R. F. Schenck, USNR
LCI(FS)-440 Lieutenant C. J. Keyes, USNR
LCI(FS)-441 Lieutenant (jg) G. H. Callaghan, USNR
LCI(FS)-442 Lieutenant (jg) H. P. Rabenstein

(j) *TG 52.9 CARRIER SUPPORT GROUP* Rear Admiral R. E. Davison (1916)
CVE-61 (GF) *Manila Bay* Captain B. L. Braun (1921)
CVE-57 *Coral Sea* Captain H. W. Taylor (1921)
CVE-58 *Corregidor* Captain R. L. Bowman (1921)
DD-598 (F) *Bancroft* Commander R. M. Pitts (1932)
DD-606 *Coghlan* Lieutenant Commander B. B. Cheatham (1933)
DD-605 *Caldwell* Lieutenant Commander G. Wendelburg (1933)
DD-585 *Halligan* Commander C. E. Cortner (1927)



80–G–307474

Fifth Amphibious Force Staff, March 1944.

(k) *TG 52.10 MINESWEEPING AND HYDROGRAPHIC GROUP* Commander F. F. Sima, USNR
TU 52.10.1 SWEEP UNIT ONE Commander F. F. Sima, USNR
AM-110 (F) *Revenge* Commander F. F. Sima, USNR
AM-108 *Pursuit* Lieutenant R. F. Good, USNR
AM-109 *Requisite* Lieutenant Commander H. R. Peirce, USNR
TU 52.10.2 SWEEP UNIT TWO Lieutenant J. H. Pace, USNR
YMS-90 (F) Lieutenant J. H. Pace, USNR
YMS-91 Lieutenant (jg) W. A. Hurst, USNR
YMS-383 Lieutenant (jg) W. M. Merritt, USNR
YMS-388 Lieutenant (jg) R. E. Crowley, USNR
LCC-37 (Landing Craft Control)

(l) *TG 52.11 SOUTHERN SALVAGE UNIT* Lieutenant Commander L. H. Curtis
ATF-93 (F) *Tekesta* Lieutenant John O. Strickland
ATF-68 *Arapaho* Lieutenant C. B. Lee
ATF-92 *Tawasa* Lieutenant F. C. Clark

Notes: (a) At the time of the Kwajalein Operation the LCI above were temporarily designated LCI (FS). The FS was for Fire Support; (b) Underwater Demolition Team One under the command of Commander E. D. Brewster (CEC), USNR, was attached to CTF 52; (c) Year date is date of first commission.

THE JAPANESE DEFENSIVE STRATEGY—THE MARSHALLS

In mid-September 1943, the Japanese high command, without letting Admiral Nimitz in on the secret, modified their "Z" Operation Plan and drew anew an outer boundary line around what they considered their "vital defensive area." The new line encompassed only the Kuriles, the Marianas, and the Carolines in the Central Pacific. The Gilbert Islands and the Marshall Islands, by this decision, were removed from the list of areas, where the Japanese Navy would commit their Combined Fleet, the heart of their seagoing Navy, to offensive battle.

Had Vice Admiral Spruance known of this major Japanese decision, it is probable that he would have been much more worry-free as he moved into the Gilberts and into the Marshalls in November 1943, and in January 1944.

This strategic withdrawal was a major defensive decision by the Japanese high command. But it was accompanied by a somewhat contrariwise Japanese decision to build up their garrisons and island defenses in the Marshalls and to feed into the Marshalls more of the scanty Japanese air resources. The purpose of this increased defensive effort was to gain adequate time to make the defenses of the Marianas and the Bonin Islands "impregnable."

In accordance with these decisions, Japanese garrisons in the Marshalls, made up of both Army and Navy personnel, had reached the following combatant strength in December 1943, according to Japanese records.

Jaluit	2,205	Mille	5,101
Maloelap	3,298	Wotje	3,097 [34]

The Japanese Naval personnel, trained along the lines of our Marines, were organized into "Special Naval Landing Forces" for duty on these island bases. The Japanese Army troops defending alongside these SNLFs were organized into Amphibious Brigades and "South Seas Detachments."

THE DEFENDING JAPANESE

The same Japanese Fourth Fleet, which had been responsible, with such limited seagoing resources, for defense of the Gilbert Islands, also was responsible for defending the Marshall Islands. The backbone of this very small Fleet was three light cruisers, the *Isuzu, Naka,* and *Nagara,* launched down the ways from 19 to 24 years prior to 1944. There was also a division of destroyers and some logistic support ships. The 24th Air Flotilla consisting of 40 bombers and 30 fighters, which replaced the 22nd Air Flotilla on 5 December 1943, provided a limited complement for the many air bases within the Marshall Island command.

Vice Admiral Masashi Kobayashi, IJN, was the Commander in Chief, Fourth Fleet, and long carried his heavy burden at a headquarters located on Truk in the Carolines. Rear Admiral Michiyuki Yamada, IJN, commanded the 24th Air Flotilla from his air headquarters on Namur Island.

A subordinate unit of the Fourth Fleet, the Japanese 6th Base Force, and its immediate subordinate unit, the 6th Defenses Force, carried out the "defend and die" mission for the Marshalls in January–February 1944. Rear Admiral Monzo Akiyama, IJN, was in command of the 6th Base Force with headquarters on Kwajalein Island.

On 19 November 1943, Vice Admiral Kobayashi, probably alerted by the air sighting of the LSTs headed for the Gilberts, temporarily joined his subordinates at Kwajalein Atoll. However, he wisely returned to Truk before 31 January 1944.

[34] (a) USSBS, *Campaigns of the Pacific War,* pp. 7, 191; (b) USSBS, *American Campaign against Wotje, Maloelap, Mille and Jaluit,* p. 21. (c) Japanese Studies in World War II, No. 72, History of the Army Section, Imperial General Headquarters, 1941–45, pp. 77, 88.

This visit to Kwajalein did not necessarily mean that the Japanese expected us to assault there. In fact, quite the contrary seems true. One Japanese naval officer on the Staff of the Combined Fleet in 1943–1944 gave, in 1945, his remembrance of the December 1943–January 1944 period of the Pacific War:

> There was divided opinion as to whether you would land at Jaluit or Mille. Some thought you would land on Wotje but there were few who thought you would go right to the heart of the Marshalls and take Kwajalein. There were so many possible points of invasion in the Marshalls, that we could not consider any one a strong point and consequently dispersed our strength.[35]

Mille, closest to the Gilberts, drew the largest troop strength.

DEFENSIVE STRENGTH—KWAJALEIN ATOLL

The Japanese defenses of the three main islands in Kwajalein Atoll, Kwajalein, Roi and Namur, were largely at the beaches. There was no defense in depth. A captured Japanese statement of doctrine of this period called for the "enemy to be destroyed at the beach," and should that fail, "then the enemy will be destroyed by counter-attack."

This was the same Japanese scheme of defense as used at Tarawa. Since, as far as is known, no Japanese defender at Tarawa escaped homeward to advise his superiors on the proper future defense of atolls, the lagoon beaches of Kwajalein, Roi, and Namur Islands continued to be less well defended than the beaches fronting on the ocean.

The JICPOA (Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area) post battle report of the defenses of Roi-Namur states:

> In studying the defenses of Roi-Namur it must be borne in mind that they presented nothing comparable to Tarawa, either as to size and number of weapons or construction and concentration of positions.
>
> There was nothing as large as the . . . 8″ and the . . . 5.5″ coast defense guns found on Tarawa. . . .
>
> There were no positions for the 8cm [3.2″] coast defense and 8cm [3.2″], the 75mm [3″] mobile antiaircraft, 75mm [3″] mountain gun, or the 70mm [2.8″] infantry howitzer as were found on Tarawa; nor were any guns of the anti-boat, anti-personnel group found except for two 37mm [1.5″] rapid fire guns.[36]

Following a count of the fixed guns positions made by JICPOA and by

[35] USSBS Interrogation No. 139 (Commander Chika Taka Nakajima), p. 144.

[36] JICPOA Bulletin No. 48–44, "Japanese Defenses Kwajalein Atoll," 18 Apr. 1944, p. 27.

the Engineer of the V Amphibious Corps, after the successful assault, their judgment was that, compared with Tarawa, the ocean beach defenses of Kwajalein Island were good but not strong. The defenses of Roi-Namur were judged very modest on the lagoon beaches, good but not strong on the ocean beach approaches, and superior to those of Kwajalein.[37]

As the Engineer, V Amphibious Corps, stated in his FLINTLOCK Report on 15 February 1944:

> While Roi-Namur were better fortified than Kwajalein, the siting of weapons was premised on an attempted landing from the north and seaward side.

When FLINTLOCK was all over, the Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Areas, gave as its opinion:

> The effective aerial bombing, naval shelling and artillery concentration placed on the defended islands of Kwajalein Atoll, made an accurate study of the Japanese defenses impossible.[38]

But despite this assertion, JICPOA did make diagrams of the defenses, based on captured Japanese drawings of the defense installations, interrogation of prisoners, and on ground reconnaissance conducted 2 February 1944. These diagrams were used for the Army's history of the seizure of the Marshalls.

The diagrams of Japanese defenses shown in the Marine monograph of the Marshalls operation, published in 1954, very markedly increase the Japanese defenses on the lagoon areas (where the Marines landed) over those recorded by JICPOA or by the Engineer on Major General Holland Smith's Fifth Amphibious Corps Staff. To illustrate, on the lagoon beaches of Roi, the diagrams for the Marine monograph show four large concrete Japanese blockhouses similar to the blockhouses on the north and west shores of Roi designated "Brownie," "Bobby," "Bernie," and "Bruce." They correspond exactly to a situation map prepared on 24 December 1943 by the Intelligence Section, Fifth Amphibious Force, from photo interpretations. A later Marine situation map, issued by the Fifth Amphibious Corps on 31 December 1943, after more photographic reconnaissance, and distributed three weeks before the Marines left Hawaii, shows but two of these blockhouses on the lagoon beaches of Roi. Before the assault, the *Maryland*

[37] (a) Engineer, V Amphibious Corps, Study and Report of Japanese Defenses of Kwajalein Atoll, 15 Feb. 1944; (b) Heinl and Crown, *The Marshalls* (Marine Corps Monograph), p. 32; (c) Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls*, p. 214; (d) JICPOA No. 53–43, "Kwajalein," 1 Dec. 1943 and No. 48–44, "Fortifications and Defense Installations," 10 Apr. 1944.

[38] JICPOA Bulletin No. 48–44.



80-G-230854

Blockhouse "BRUCE" on Roi Island after treatment by USS Maryland.

polished off "Bruce" as the accompanying photograph will show. Following the battle, JICPOA and the Engineer for the Marines Fifth Amphibious Corps, after tramping over Roi-Namur early in February 1944, reported fewer defensive positions than the 24 December situation map. In further substantiation, the text of the Marine monograph reads in regard to this particular point of large blockhouses in the lagoon shore of Roi:

> In place of the two blockhouses reported by aerial-photographic interpreters, the Marines found but one stove-in pillbox, surrounded by a profusion of fuel drums and jetsam from what had evidently been a dump area.[39]

This was "Bruce."

JAPANESE DEFENDERS

Post-war interrogation of Japanese officers indicated that on 23 December

[39] Heinl and Crown, *The Marshalls* (Marine Corps Monograph), p. 72. See also JICPOA Bulletin No. 48–44, Map 4; Engineer FIFTHPHIBCORPS Study of 15 Feb. 1944; FIFTHPHIBCORPS FLINTLOCK Report, 6 Mar. 1944, Vol. 2, Encl. (B) and Vol. 3, Appendix G, Situation Map, 31 Dec. 1943.

1943, 1,500 troops reached Mille from Kwajalein. In an intelligence estimate written about the time this movement was happening, Rear Admiral Turner's guess as to Japanese strength on Kwajalein Atoll was:

> It is estimated that . . . approximately 7500 [Japanese] troops are located on Kwajalein Atoll including 3000 base and construction personnel. It is considered likely that the total number is fairly evenly distributed between the Northern and Southern Islands.[40]

This was a very good over-all estimate of Japanese military personnel and attached labor units, but considerably overestimated the number of Japanese troops.

Post-war study of the scanty Japanese records available led to an estimate in 1954 by Army historians of total Japanese strength of about 7,500, of whom 5,000 were base or construction personnel or Korean laborers. The same year, the Marine historians estimated a total of 8,000 Japanese military personnel and attached labor units with 3,000 on Roi-Namur, 3,000 on Kwajalein, and 2,000 on other islands within the atoll. It seems well established that on all of Kwajalein Atoll, the total of Japanese Special Naval Landing Force personnel, trained in the same manner as our Marines, and Japanese infantrymen did not exceed 2,500, the large majority of whom were on Kwajalein.

It has been established that there were about 1,820 effective Japanese Army and Navy infantry-type troops on Kwajalein, plus about half as many staff and communication personnel, and some 1,800 other para-military, including 1,400 labor troops and a contingent of Koreans.[41]

Of these 1,820 effectives, 729 were Japanese Army troops who had the bad luck to be on Kwajalein Island awaiting transportation to Wotje when our forces assaulted Kwajalein. Additionally, there were 550 regularly assigned Army troops, and 250 Japanese-type Marines from the Yokosuka 4th Special Naval Landing Force. Fourteen hundred labor troops unfit for ordinary military service were building the new airfield on Kwajalein.

As in Vietnam nowadays, the Marines on Roi-Namur and the other northern islands were exact in counting the bodies. They reported counting 3,563 enemy dead or captured in the northern half of Kwajalein Atoll. In

[40] CTF 51 GALVANIC Op Plan A6–43, para 1(d).

[41] Crowl and Love, *Marshalls* (Army), page 217, gives 4,515 on Kwajalein. Marine *Marshalls*, page 34 gives 4,850 on Kwajalein and the other southern islands. In USSBS, *Campaigns of the Pacific War*, page 197, there is a Military Intelligence Service estimate of 8,000 with 3,000 on Kwajalein, 3,000 on Roi-Namur, and 2,000 on the other islands.

any case, the bulk of the regularly assigned Japanese (some 2,500) on the two causeway-connected islands, Roi and Namur, were technical aviation or aviation base personnel such as storekeepers and aviation machinists as there were only 345 Japanese troops assigned there from the defending 61st Guard Force. Japanese records and post-battle interrogation of prisoners indicate there were 357 laborers supporting the Japanese construction and base personnel on Roi-Namur.[12]

THE HOW: THE GENERAL PLAN FOR FLINTLOCK

Vice Admiral Spruance, Commander Central Pacific Force, issued his Operation Plan for FLINTLOCK, CEN-1–44, on 6 January 1944. He designated Rear Admiral Turner as Commander Task Force 51 and Commander Joint Expeditionary Force. Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly, who had distinguished himself in the Mediterranean during the Tunisian, Sicilian, and Italian amphibious campaigns, and who had been specifically requested by CINCPAC for amphibious assignment in the Pacific, was charged with the capture of the northern half of Kwajalein Atoll as Commander Task Force 53.

The Fourth Division of Marines, under Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC, was the Northern Landing Force.[13]

Rear Admiral Turner as CTF 52 and Commander Southern Attack Force, together with Major General C. H. Corlett, USA, as Commander Southern Landing Force and the Army's Seventh Infantry Division were charged with taking the southern half of Kwajalein Atoll.

Captain Donald W. Loomis, who had fought through WATCHTOWER and GALVANIC, was assigned as Commander Attack Force Reserve Group (CTG 51.1). Carried aboard the ships of his command were about 9,000 troops from the 22nd Regiment of Marines and the 106th Infantry Regiment, under Brigadier General Thomas E. Watson, USMC, and designated as the Reserve Landing Force.

Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill, the third of the regularly assigned amphibious group commanders in the Fifth Amphibious Force, was CTG 51.2 and

[12] (a) COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS FLINTLOCK Report, encl. (D), p. 12; (b) Crowl and Love, p. 218; (c) Marine Corps Monograph, *Marshalls,* pp. 31, 32; (d) 6th Base Force War Diary, translation by CINCPOA.

[13] (a) CINCPAC Op Plan 16–43, 12 Oct. 1943; (b) COMFIFTHFLT (COMCENPAC) Op Plan CEN 1–44, 6 Jan. 1944.

charged with the occupation of Majuro Atoll. Lieutenant Colonel Frederick B. Sheldon, USA, commanded the Majuro Landing Force, which was the 2nd Battalion of the 106th Infantry Regiment.

CODE NAMES

The geographical names of the smaller islands in the Kwajalein Atoll, in general, were such difficult tongue twisters that, not only before the assault, but subsequent thereto, it was customary to use their code names in lieu of their regular ones. This practice is continued in this work.

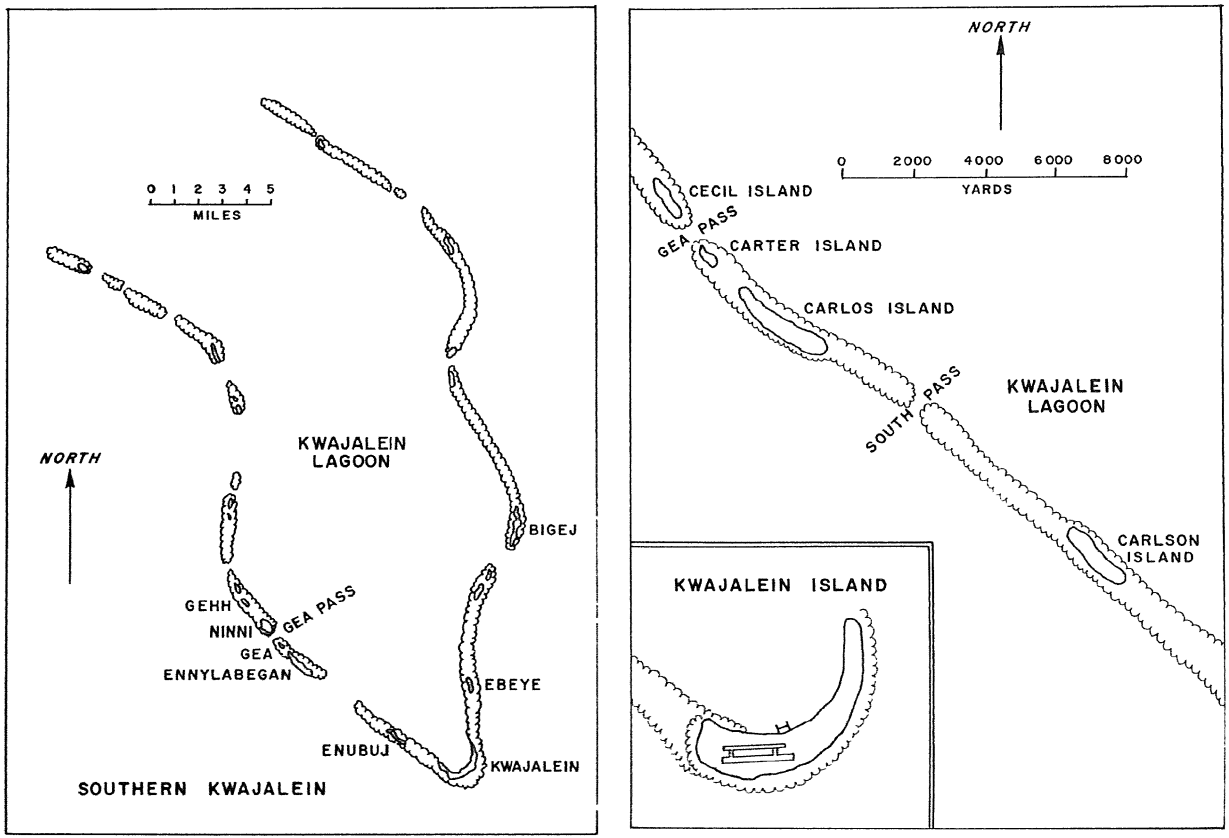
Here are the principal islands and their code names:

ISLAND	*Code Name*
Northern Kwajalein	
Ennuebing	JACOB
Ennubirr	ALLEN
Ennugarret	ABRAHAM
Ennumennet	ALBERT
Mellu	IVAN
Namur	CAMOUFLAGE
Obella	ANDREW
Roi	BURLESQUE
Southern Kwajalein	
Bigej	BENNETT
Ebeye	BURTON
Ennylabegan	CARLOS
Enubuj	CARLSON
Gea	CARTER
Gehh	CHAUNCEY
Kwajalein	PORCELAIN
Ninni	CECIL

STRATEGIC FEATURES

The principal strategic features of the CINCPOA FLINTLOCK Plan called for:

a. Intensified bombing of the Marshalls commencing 15 January 1944 by shore-based air and by carrier-based air.



Left: Southern Kwajalein Atoll. Right: Gea and South Passes.

b. Intensified submarine attacks on all Japanese naval and merchant shipping in the Marshalls.

c. Heavy gun bombardment of selected Japanese naval and air bases in the Marshalls commencing on 29 January 1944 by new battleships temporarily detached from fast carrier task groups, and by a special bombardment group of heavy cruisers and destroyers.

THE SCHEMES OF MANEUVER
BASIC PLAN

The basic over-all FLINTLOCK plan envisioned that the neutralization of Wotje and Maloelap by bombing from land-based air, by carrier air attacks, and by surface gun bombardment would be accomplished by 30 January 1944. The Northern and Southern islands of Kwajalein Atoll were to be assaulted simultaneously by the amphibians on 31 January 1944. Majuro—which was believed to be either very lightly held or perhaps undefended—was to be "seized by one Marine defense battalion." Majuro was to be kept from being alerted to an impending assault by not being attacked in any way prior to Dog Day.

The general Schemes of Maneuver at Kwajalein Atoll and at Majuro Atoll contemplated three phases.

This phased and hence slower approach to the main objective was one which had been considered during the planning period for the Gilbert Islands Operation. It was rejected by Admiral Spruance because of anticipation of an immediate response to the assault by main Japanese Fleet and air forces, and hence the need for surprise and quick conquest. The three phases were:

Phase I Dog Day	Seizure of island positions from which to support main landings.
Phase II Dog Day Plus One	Assault and occupy Roi and Namur Islands in the north and Kwajalein Island in the south of Kwajalein Atoll, and Darrit Island in Majuro Atoll.
Phase III Dog Day Plus ???	Establish defenses on assault islands and reduce enemy opposition on remaining islands of Kwajalein Atoll and Majuro Atoll.

PHASE I—KWAJALEIN

The Scheme of Maneuver for Kwajalein Island developed by Commander Landing Troops for the Southern Attack Force, and declared hydrographically practical by the Navy, called for troops to land before dawn on Dog Day from two APDs on two small islands guarding a good entrance channel (Gea Pass) to Kwajalein Lagoon some nine miles to the northwest of Kwajalein. These two islands were named Ninni and Gea and bore the code names of CECIL and CARTER.

At How Hour on Dog Day, initially set for 0830, 31 January 1944, other troops would land on Ennylabegan Island and Enubuj Islands (code names CARLOS and CARLSON). On CARLSON Island, which was only two and a half miles from Kwajalein, artillery would be emplaced for support of the main assault of the Southern Landing Force. These four landings were Phase I of the Scheme of Maneuver for the Southern Attack Force.

PHASE II—KWAJALEIN

Depending upon the success of these operations on Dog Day, the main assault landings would take place on the western beaches of Kwajalein Island at William Hour, 0930, the following day. This main assault was Phase II of the Southern Attack Force operation.

From the seaman's point of view, the western beaches of Kwajalein Island were well chosen since they did provide some lee from the prevailing swell for amtracts carrying their important loads of assault troops. Landing seasick soldiers on a defended shore is one sure way to get an assault started under a handicap.

A landing effected on the western beaches of Kwajalein Island would be free from flanking fire, and the beachhead established there could be supported by both naval and shore based artillery. The latter aspect necessitated a landing on the small island, CARLSON, to the northwestward.

The alternate Scheme of Maneuver called for Phase II landings on lagoon beaches Green Two, Green Three and Green Four, along the northwestern shore of Kwajalein Island.

PHASE I—ROI-NAMUR

The Scheme of Maneuver at Roi-Namur followed the classic pattern of

seizing lightly defended islands within artillery range of the main objective, in order to provide artillery support, in addition to naval gunfire for the main assault landings. Since the assault landings were to be made from the lagoons it was equally necessary that these islands be under our control to prevent their use by the enemy to fire on and disrupt the assault craft as they approached the assault beaches.

In this case, IVAN (Mellu) and JACOB (Ennuebing) Islands, south and west of Roi Island, were to be captured by landings from seaward at How Hour on Dog Day—hopefully set at 0900, 31 January. Ninety minutes later ALLEN (Ennubirr) and ALBERT (Ennumennet) Islands eastward across the lagoon and southeast of Namur Island were to be seized by landings on their lagoon beaches.

These four landings, followed by the Marines on ALBERT (Ennumennet) moving north to ABRAHAM (Ennugarret) Island for a fifth landing, were Phase I. Successful accomplishment would permit a considerable amount of artillery to be landed on Dog Day for support of the main assaults on Dog Day plus one.

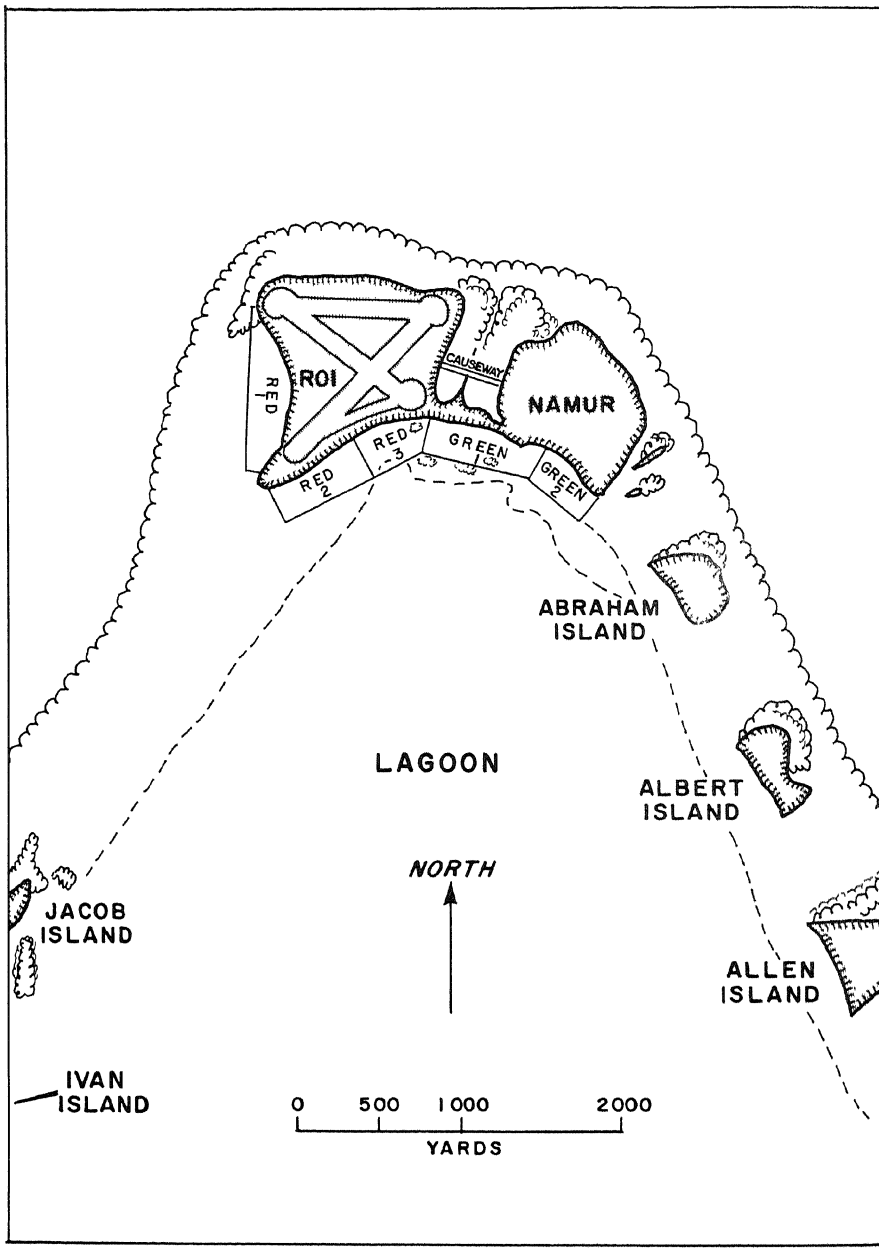
PHASE II—ROI-NAMUR

Scheduled for 1 February 1944, were simultaneous landings on the southern (lagoon) beaches of Roi Island and Namur Island at Red Two, Red Three and Green One, Green Two Beaches respectively. This was Phase II.

This Scheme of Maneuver at Roi-Namur was more complicated than it may seem since it involved five objectives to be taken on one day by a provisional Landing Group of Marines, with a limited number of amtracs (10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion). The timing, with the available supply of amtracs, was exact and depended for efficient execution upon reliable voice radio communications, both afloat and ashore.

MAJURO

The Scheme of Maneuver for Majuro was not greatly different in concept from the standard pattern. It called for seizure on Dog Day of two small islands, Eroj and Calalin, marking Calalin Channel, the main entrance to Majuro Lagoon, followed by a "shore-to-shore" amphibious movement to



Landing objectives, Northern Kwajalein

seize the larger islands on Dog Day and Dog plus one. The necessary troops were carried aboard one attack transport and one destroyer-type transport.

Since there was but one Japanese soldier on Majuro to "defend and die," this operation can be told in one paragraph.

The first report from the reconnaissance party landed to take a "look-see" and get the up-to-the-minute information on Japanese forces, and made about 2345 on 30 January 1944, was that 300 to 400 Japanese troops were on Darrit Island. Contrary information was soon at hand that there were only four Japanese, only one of whom was military, on the islands of Majuro Atoll. But before this second and correct report was at hand, Darrit Island was under gun bombardment from Rear Admiral Hill's task group. It took some minutes to grind the fire to a halt, and some hours to complete a physical reconnaissance of all the islands and capture the single Japanese naval warrant officer, who was the custodian and overseer of Japanese property in Majuro Atoll, and the sole military occupant.

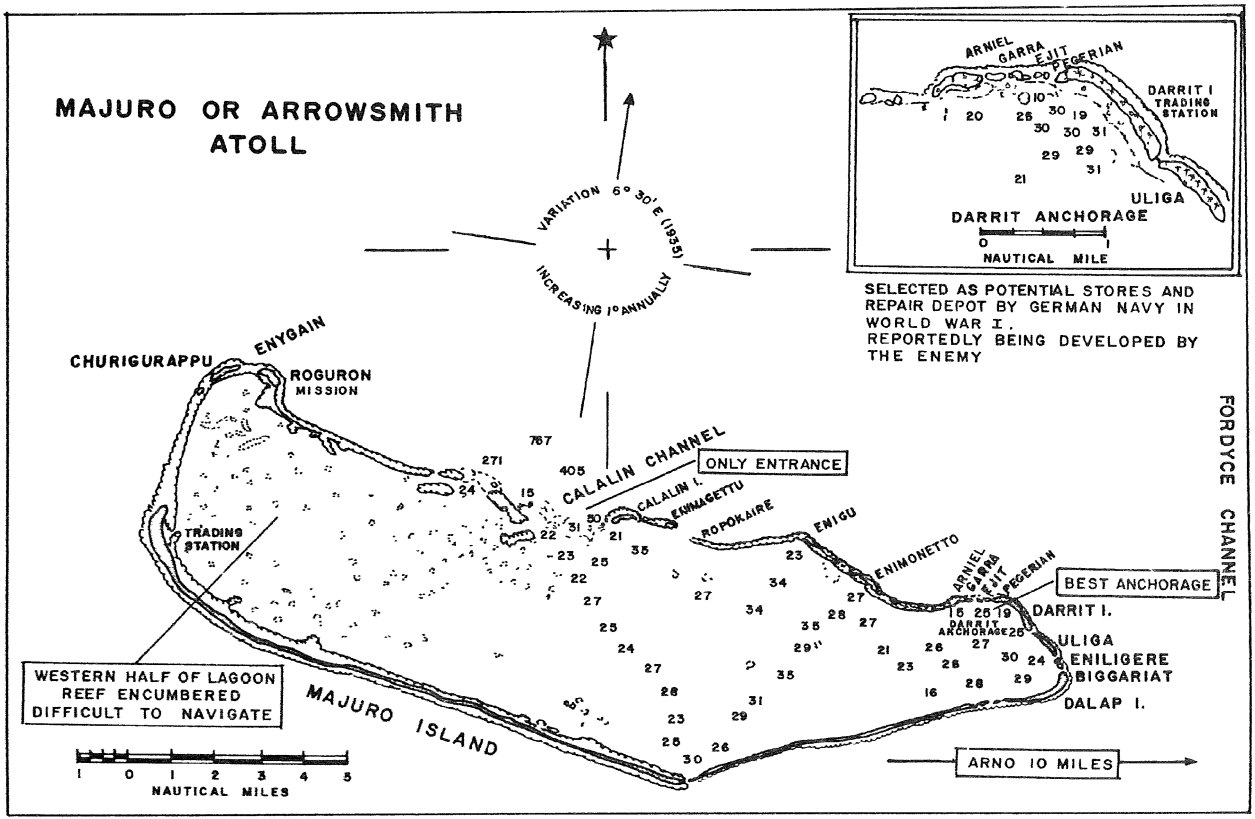
It was not until 15 February 1944 that radio silence was broken at Majuro Atoll. By that time Majuro was an operating Fleet anchorage, and soon to be a primary staging base for operations against the Marianas.

NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCES

The capture of the small islands guarding the main ship entrances into Kwajalein lagoon and the early sweeping of these channels and anchorage areas within the lagoon were essential features of the plans from a naval as well as a troop point of view. Both unloading of logistic support and close fire support would be facilitated by the calmer waters of the lagoon. Following these mine sweeping operations, fire support ships and transports would enter the lagoons.

TIME OUT FOR NEW YEAR CHEER

The New Year found All Hands in the Fifth Amphibious Force pressing for the rehearsals for FLINTLOCK soon to be held. Not too busy, however, for the LST-242 started her 1944 War Diary with this bad doggerel:



Majuro or Arrowsmith Atoll.

Ensign Spoeneman O.O.D.
In Drydock's 2 sheltered lee
Upon blocks as before
Making ready for Pacific War.

Of three other ships we're aware
in here also for repair
The other vessels are LST
Twenty-three and Two forty-three.

The Eighty-four is with us too
Pearl Harbor makes us all like new
Yard work continues on apace
In this busy naval base.

PRE-DOG DAY, ARMY AIR FORCE AIR STRIKES

Anyone who had questioned the necessity of taking the Gilberts before moving into the Marshalls, should have had his doubts removed—when the Army Air Force moved its Seventh Air Force bombers and fighters from Oahu, Funafuti, Nanomea, Baker, and Canton into the Gilberts, and put them to work under Rear Admiral J. H. Hoover, Commander Defense Forces and Land/Base Air, CTF 57. Altogether TF 57 had nearly 350 Army and Navy aircraft.

The B-24s based back in the Ellice Islands were flying 2,794, 3,027 or 3,100 miles to reach their Marshall Island targets and were able to mount a strike only about every other day. In the last ten days of November 1943, they mounted strikes against Jaluit, Mille, Maloelap, the former once and the latter two atolls twice. They mustered a total of 59 B-24s over the targets in these five strikes of late November 1943. In the last ten days of December 1943, when the Ellice Island aircraft could stage through Tarawa going or returning and the shorter range A-25s and B-25s could be based on Tarawa, the Seventh Air Force mustered 210 bombers over not only Jaluit, Mille and Maloelap, but over far away Wotje and Kwajalein. And the chores of the bombers were made considerably less risky by the fact that P-39s and, later, P-40 fighter aircraft were able to accompany them to the nearer targets and help fend off the Japanese fighter aircraft.[44]

By the last ten days of January 1944, the period just before the invasion of the Marshalls, with the newly built airfield on Apamama in the Gilbert

[44] Operational History of the Seventh Air Force, pp. 13–35, 90–124.

Islands now available for use, the number of bomber strikes by Task Force 57 again more than doubled rising to 444. Any fortified Japanese atoll in the Marshalls that was not struck every day was in good luck.

Additionally, the Marshall Atolls near the Gilberts were strafed daily by fighters or had United States fighter patrols maintained over them during daylight hours to prevent their use by Japanese aircraft.

Thus, the capture of the Gilberts paid tremendous dividends.

PRE-DOG DAY NAVAL AIR STRIKES

Way back in October 1943, and well before the GALVANIC armada had sailed from Pearl Harbor in November for the Gilberts, Admiral Nimitz noted in his Command Summary:

> The planning groups currently are preparing studies and outline plans for carrier raids on the Marshall Islands and Nauru immediately after completion of GALVANIC, and on TRUK sometime between GALVANIC and FLINTLOCK.[45]

A reorganized and considerably reduced in size Task Force 50 (Rear Admiral Pownall) with four large carriers, *Enterprise, Essex, Lexington* and *Yorktown,* two cruiser-hulled carriers, *Belleau Wood* (CVL-24), and *Cowpens* (CVL-25), with supporting combatant ships and 386 aircraft, was ordered to make raids on Kwajalein and Wotje on its way home to Pearl from GALVANIC. The Task Force approach was made from the northeast of Kwajalein with initial launch for the 4 December attack near Rongerik Atoll.

Numerous photographic missions were flown, and 246 aircraft participated in the operation. Japanese air reaction was heavy and sustained.

Bombing success was modest, although 85.5 tons of bombs were dropped on Kwajalein Atoll and 11.0 tons on Wotje Atoll. Taroa Island in Maloelap Atoll was not hit at all and a second planned strike on the other objectives was not carried through. The *Lexington* picked up a torpedo in her stern quarter during a night Japanese torpedo attack, pushed through while the task group was hightailing it for Pearl Harbor.

However, one of the photographic planes brought home a clear picture of a new bomber strip on Kwajalein Island, which was about 70 percent completed. This meant that the amphibians probably would have to assault simultaneously both Roi-Namur in the northern part of the atoll and

[45] CINCPAC Command Summary, Book Four, 31 Oct. 1943, p. 1679.

Kwajalein Island in the southern part. And it represented one more reason indicating the desirability of an early seizure of Kwajalein Atoll.

On the original of the CTF 50 report of this operation and opposite the recommendations for future air strikes at the Marshalls as made by Rear Admiral Pownall to Admiral Nimitz appears a pencil notation "all defensive" in recognizable handwriting. In any case when the attack carrier task forces went to sea as TF 58 for FLINTLOCK, Rear Admiral Marc A. Mitscher was the Task Force Commander and Vice Admiral J. H. Towers, the long-time naval aviator, was the Deputy to CINCPAC, Rear Admiral Pownall having relieved the latter as Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet.[46]

Between 27 and 30 January 1944, the fast carrier task forces, Task Force 58, divided into four groups and carrying nearly 700 aircraft, not only worked over Roi and Kwajalein Islands, but finished off Japanese air strength on Wotje and Maloelap Atolls and started Eniwetok Atoll on the downhill path.

COMPOSITE EFFORTS TASK FORCE 57 AND TASK FORCE 58

The composite and heavy pre-Dog Day air strikes of the naval carrier air and naval land based planes and the Army Air Force land based planes wiped out the Japanese defensive air resources in the eastern Marshalls during the month of January 1944. The few serviceable Japanese aircraft remaining as January drew to a close were evacuated from Jaluit, Mille, and Wotje before Dog Day, and all pilots from Maloelap on Dog Day plus one. The Japanese reported they lost 100 planes during this period. United States estimates were 50 percent higher. The end result was the same; zero Japanese aircraft remained.[47]

Japanese records do not disclose how many flyable planes were on Kwajalein Atoll on 29 January 1944, when the final fast carrier task force attacks began. One Japanese officer reported there were only 10 serviceable aircraft on Kwajalein Atoll by 25 January. On the other hand it has been guessed that there were as many as 35 flyable Japanese aircraft at the atoll on Dog Day minus one. In any case, no Japanese plane was aloft over Kwajalein Atoll after the morning carrier attack on 30 January.[48]

[46] CINCPAC to COMINCH, 240349 Dec. 1943 and 191926 Jan. 1944.

[47] USSBS, *The American Campaign Against Wotje, Maloelap, Mille and Jaluit,* pp. 35–37.

[48] (a) USSBS, *The Campaigns of the Pacific War,* pp. 201–202; (b) Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls,* p. 211; (c) CTF 51 FLINTLOCK Report.

As an interested Army observer wrote to the Chief of Staff of the Army Air Force:

> The consistent bombing of the Japanese airfields in the Marshalls prior to DOG DAY resulted in the fast carrier task forces approaching their objectives undetected Not one hostile aircraft made an attack against any element of our naval forces in the Marshalls prior to, during or immediately after DOG DAY.[49]

NEUTRALIZATION GROUP

A new naval element was brought into FLINTLOCK, the Neutralization Group of three heavy cruisers, four destroyers and two minecraft. The Neutralization Group was given the mission to:

> Deny to the enemy the use of airfields at Wotje and Taroa [Maloelap] by maintaining an intermittent surface ship bombardment of the airfields, air facilities and housing areas
> Mine the lagoon entrances.[50]

They were to commence operations on Dog Day minus two, and their operations had to be based on the assumption that so few Japanese aircraft would still be flying in the Marshalls that these ships could cruise unharmed by air attack within gun range of the Japanese airfields.

This turned out to be a valid assumption as far as Japanese aircraft were concerned.

The Neutralization Group conducted daylight cruiser bombardments of Taroa and Wotje on 29, 30, and 31 January from beyond the range of the shore batteries and continued these gunnery drills on 1, 2, and 3 February 1944. The destroyers conducted six-hour night bombardments of Taroa and Wotje on the nights of 29 and 30 January and 1 February. Some 2,352 eight-inch high capacity shells and 2,240 five-inch common shells were fired to keep the air strips inoperative and to destroy supporting Japanese installations.

> Fifty to sixty percent of the projectiles fired without point detonating fuses failed to explode.[51]

Despite this handicap and in combination with carrier air strikes on Taroa

[49] COMGENPAC to C/S Air Force, letter, 10 Feb. 1944.
[50] COMFIFTHFLT (COMCENPAC) Op Plan 1–44, 6 Jan. 1944, para 3d.
[51] CTG 50.15 FLINTLOCK Report, 15 Feb. 1944, para 7(j).

on 29 and 30 January and on Wotje on 29, 30, and 31 January, Japanese air efforts in the eastern Marshalls became a flat zero.

PRE-DOG DAY GUN BOMBARDMENT—MARSHALLS

To supplement the efforts of the Neutralization Group, a special detachment of the Northern Support Group (TG 53.5) consisting of one heavy cruiser, three light cruisers and six destroyers, also bombarded Otdia Island in Wotje Atoll on 30 January.

A brisk encounter between the still alert 5.5-inch coast defense guns and the 6-inch and 8-inch guns of the cruisers was ended when the ships opened the range after the destroyer *Anderson* had been hit. The ships continued with their primary mission, the bombardment of the runways and revetments. Some 6,620 shells were plowed into the airfield area.

GUNFIRE SUPPORT

The instructions of senior Fleet commanders for gunfire support to be fired at Kwajalein Atoll were a great deal more detailed than they had been in previous amphibious operations.

The Commander in Chief, Pacific laid down certain general principles, which the lower commands were required to follow. With slight modifications this became the pattern for the remaining amphibious campaigns in the area of Pacific Fleet operations. Specifically, he directed:

BOMBARDMENT

1. Naval Gunfire Support

Gunfire support plans for bombardment of enemy-held atoll islands should embody the following:

a. Five general phases of bombardment as follows:

(1) Initial counter-battery fire against known strong points using HC [high capacity] and AP [armor piercing] projectiles, and commencing at ranges producing an angle of fall of 15 degrees.

(2) General area bombardment using HC and AA common projectiles delivered at ranges between 10,000 and 5,000 yards.

(3) Destruction of heavy defenses, pillboxes, and dugouts along the landing beaches by slow, accurate, and deliberate fire, using AP and common projectiles. This fire is to be delivered at close ranges using pointer fire, if practicable.

(4) Heavy concentration fire at close range on landing beach areas during the boat approach.

(5) Delivery of call fire by ships assigned after H-Hour.

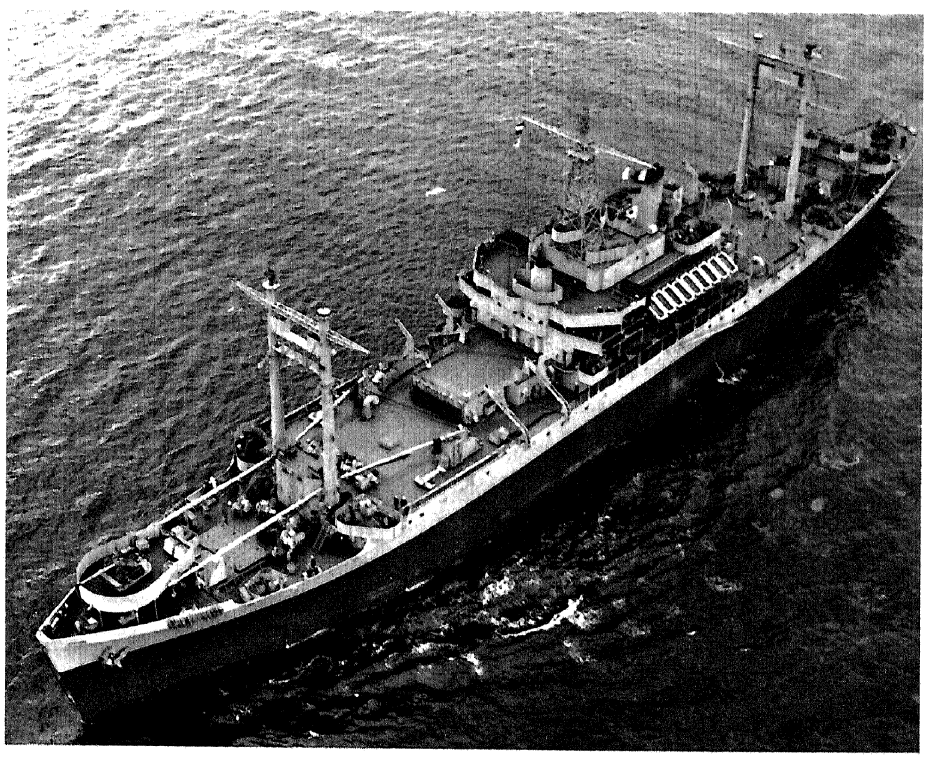
a. Use of a rolling barrage system of fire rather than radical shifting of target areas during area bombardment.

b. Restriction of air burst firing to use only as a weapon of opportunity against exposed personnel.

c. Maximum use of 40mm batteries whenever range and other conditions permit and control of these batteries by 5-inch gun directors, if fire control installations permit.

d. Stationing of close fire support ships in a favorable position relative to the landing beaches, and at closest safe navigation range, so as to provide their continuous observation of the assault boat waves, permitting these ships to decide at what time their fire must cease for safety of landing personnel.[52]

[52] CINCPAC FLINTLOCK Planning Directive.



80-G-85693

USS Rocky Mount (*AGC-3*), *Rear Admiral Turner's flagship for the Marshall Islands Operation.*

TO SEA IN A HEADQUARTERS SHIP

On 8 January 1944, COMPHIBPAC, his staff and the Headquarters of Commander Support Aircraft embarked in the *Rocky Mount* (AGC-3). The initial reaction was that the ship was wonderful. But by the time the staff had shaken down, and the Commander, Fifth Amphibious Corps and his staff had come aboard, it was apparent that there were problems in the communication equipment—primarily interference between the many, many radio sets and radars needed and used simultaneously.[53]

These ships, which drew their "AGC" designation from a type classification of "Auxiliary General Communication Ship," were a beehouse of radio transmitters and receivers set among a forest of radars.

Only one other Headquarters Ship, the *Appalachian* (AGC-1), was available in the Central Pacific for the Marshall Island campaign. This fell to Rear Admiral Conolly.

Rear Admiral Hill had shifted his flag on 6 January 1944 from the *Maryland* to a transport fitted as a flagship, the *Cambria* (APA-36). It will be remembered that the *Cambria* had been a standby flagship for Rear Admiral Turner prior to the Gilbert Islands operation, and perhaps was the best of the transport flagships.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsal for the Southern Attack Force was held at Maalaea Bay, Maui and nearby Kahoolawe Island on 13–16 January 1944. Rehearsals by the Northern Attack Force were held at San Clemente Island, California, on 2–3 January 1944, almost a month before the actual assault. Rear Admiral Turner later wrote:

> . . . In the final rehearsals of the Northern Attack Force, it was possible to assemble part, but not all, of the supporting combatant forces. . . . Only a small proportion of the supporting carrier aircraft were available. . . . For the rehearsal of the Southern Attack Force, it was possible to make but one troop landing, and one additional partial debarkation of troops into boats for a simulated landing. . . . Part of the aircraft operated from shore instead of carrier decks, thus creating artificial conditions.[54]

Again, it was the aircraft which were short-changed in the rehearsals.

[53] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to CINCPAC, letter, Ser 079 of 20 Jan. 1944.

[54] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR (Commander Joint Expeditionary Force) FLINTLOCK Report, 25 Feb. 1944, para. 40.

APPROACH TO THE MARSHALLS

The main body of Task Force 51, the Joint Expeditionary Force, with nearly 300 ships and 54,000 assault troops embarked, departed from Pearl for FLINTLOCK operations on 22 January 1944. The Northern Attack Force had sailed from San Diego, California, on 13 January, stopping off at Lahaina Roads, Maui, for fueling on 21 January. The LSTs of the Northern Attack Force, with their precious amtracs had sailed from San Diego on 6 January, while the amtrac-bearing LSTs of the Southern Attack Force sailed from Pearl Harbor on 19 January 1944.

On 14 January 1944, the Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area had issued a chart showing Japanese air searches from the Marshalls, based on intercepted Japanese radio traffic. This chart showed the Japanese were searching to 700 miles to the south and south-southeast from the eastern Marshalls (where the air attacks against them were coming from) but only 350 miles to the east and northeast. This influenced the choice of the approach route for FLINTLOCK forces, which was made from the north-northeast.

According to Rear Admiral Turner's operational report:

> The voyage from the Hawaiian Area to the objective was almost without incident. One sound contact was reported by the Screen on January 30th. . . . It is believed all units of the Expeditionary Force reached their objectives without being detected by the enemy.[55]

The most alarming event on the passage to the objective in the Southern Attack Force occurred when at 1925 on the evening before the initial assault, the battleship *Pennsylvania* suddenly opened anti-aircraft fire. Most fortunately, no Japanese plane was around to spoil the surprise party of the on-rushing Expeditionary Force. And when things were quieted down the amphibians' War Diary noted:

> *Pennsylvania* reported firing done by excited man.[56]

The Northern Attack Force had its first moment of travail long before Dog minus one. On the passage from San Diego to Hawaii, the LSTs encountered very rough weather the night of 11–12 January. Some of the amtracs got loose on the tank decks of the LSTs, the LSTs became scattered and the LST-122 did not rejoin the formation until arrival at Nawiliwili Bay on the southeast coast of Kauai in the Hawaiian Islands on 17 January 1944.

[55] *Ibid.*, Encl. (A), para. 3.

[56] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 30 Jan. 1944.

The advance guard of the Northern Attack Force had another moment of travail on 28 January 1944. The *Lavalette* (DD-448), escort between Hawaii and Kwajalein Atoll for the Initial Tractor Group (TG 53.7), made a radar contact at 18 miles with an unidentified aircraft at 280910 and tracked the plane for some minutes. Haze and low clouds made sight contact impossible. On this date, the Japanese had only four search aircraft operating daily from the Marshalls in a quadrant between 060° to 110° from Taroa to a distance of 600 or 700 miles. These planes had no radar, but our forces did not know that.

According to a despatch to Commander Expeditionary Force from CINCPAC, a Japanese plane made a contact on the next day at 291250 with something located at 11° 17′ N, 171° 23′ E. This was about 100 miles northeast of Wotje Atoll. TG 53.7, the Northern Tractor Group (LSTs), was at 11° 27′ N, 171° 08′ E, at 1250 on 29 January, reasonably close to this position.[57]

Surprisingly, the Japanese took no offensive action against the Northern Tractor Group. But it is worth noting that again it was the slow moving LSTs which offered the Japanese the opportunity for first knowledge of the approach of the amphibians.

ON TARGET

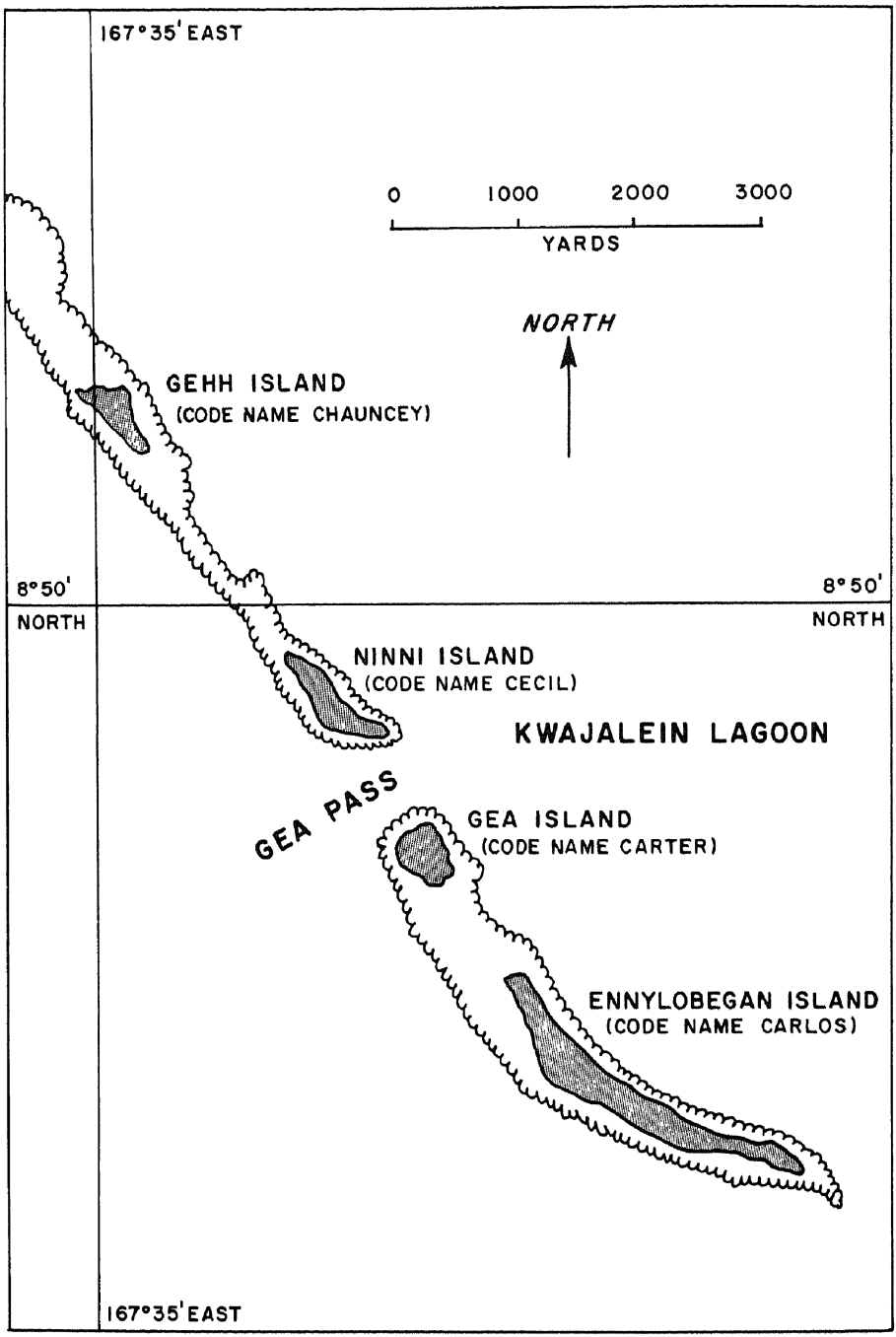
The battleships in the Southern Attack Force logged picking up Kwajalein Atoll by radar a few minutes after midnight on 30 January 1944 at ranges from 18 to 20 miles.

SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE LANDINGS
THE FIRST MOVE—AT NIGHT

A great many ships logged a strong set to the south and southwest as they moved in close to Kwajalein Atoll.

Two APDs, the *Overton* and *Manley,* designated the Channel Island Transport Group, had the difficult chore of landing a reconnaissance party and follow-up troops on a dark night on Gea Island and Ninni Island just

[57] (a) A garbled position is given in CTF 53 FLINTLOCK Report. Encl. (A), p. 9; (b) Japanese scout bombers flying from Taroa, Maloelap Atoll, had no radar. USSBS Interrogation No. 23, p. 132; (c) *Lavalette* War Diary, 28 Jan. 1944; (d) COMLSTFLOT 13 War Diary, 28 Jan. 1944.


167°35' EAST
0 1000 2000 3000
YARDS
NORTH
GEHH ISLAND
(CODE NAME CHAUNCEY)
8°50'
NORTH
8°50'
NORTH
NINNI ISLAND
(CODE NAME CECIL)
KWAJALEIN LAGOON
GEA PASS
GEA ISLAND
(CODE NAME CARTER)
ENNYLOBEGAN ISLAND
(CODE NAME CARLOS)
167°35' EAST

Gea Pass.

to the northwest of Kwajalein Island. The *Overton* was under orders to land her party on Ninni Island and the *Manley,* her party on Gea Island. Gea Island was about nine miles northwest of Kwajalein Island and Ninni Island was just a bit further northwest on the far side of Gea Pass Channel leading into the southern part of Kwajalein Lagoon. The destroyer transports were under orders to land their first wave of reconnaissance troops at "about 0330" on 31 January 1944 from rubber boats on the seaward beaches. Subsequent follow-up troops were to land from regular personnel landing craft a few minutes later.[58]

The two converted destroyers did not even come close to accomplishing their chore at the appointed hour. And following the sad example of the destroyer transports at New Georgia in TOENAILS seven months before, the *Overton* first landed her troops on the wrong island.

At 0130, the *Manley* picked up Kwajalein Island by radar. At the same time the *Overton* logged seeing the glow of fires due to the bombing of the island. It was evident that the Japanese had not been able or had not tried to darken ship (black out) in expectation of an assault.

The destroyer transports got behind schedule by inching up to their disembarkation positions about a mile from the beaches. They did not begin launching their landing craft for the reconnaissance parties and assault troops until about 0341. The current and off shore wind carried the destroyer transports seaward nearly a thousand yards while they off loaded their troops in the darkness and ocean swell. The new moon had long since set. At about 0423, the landing craft loaded with assault troops and rubber boats carrying the reconnaissance parties in the tow of ships' motor boats were shoved off for the beach. With morning twilight due to begin at 0559, and sunrise due at 0712, this was a late start for an important mission.

MANLEY—GEA ISLAND

The craft from the *Manley* proceeded slowly toward the beach, delayed by wind and sea and the holding of several conferences enroute as to which of the dark island silhouettes ahead was Gea Island.

When about one-quarter mile off the beach, during one of these dark conferences, previous plans to shift the rubber boat party to an electric-powered raft for an offshore reconnaissance and report back to the assault

[58] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR (CTF 52) Attack Order A1–44, 14 Jan. 1944, para 3(d).

party were abandoned, because of the fast approaching dawn. At 0547—just 12 minutes before dawn—the reconnaissance party from the *Manley* was logged as making an unopposed landing on Gea Island. The island was reported captured before noon.

OVERTON—NINNI ISLAND

The craft from the *Overton* wrestled with the same wind, sea, and identification problems as had those from the *Manley*. The tail end members of the *Overton* assault party were logged as having landed at a late 0603—four minutes after morning twilight had broken. By 0627, a red light had been displayed on the island and logged aboard ship, and then it was quickly noted that the light was on the wrong island. The Navy had landed the troops on Gehh Island, the next island northwest from Ninni Island. It was 0700 and broad daylight before the party on Gehh Island discovered they were on the wrong island. It was 0721 before the TBS logs show this fact reported to Rear Admiral Turner, and 0810 before the movement to the correct destination, Ninni Island, was begun and promptly executed.

After the event, the *Overton* reported she and her boat officers enroute beachward had had difficulty identifying Ninni Island, her landing target, initially because of the similarity on radar of the two islands and later due to the sameness of their dark silhouettes. The disturbing fact, however, is that on the radar screen and on the charts there are four islands in the general area of Gea Pass. Ninni and Gea are the two islands in the center close together with Gehh and Ennylabegan well separated to the left and right respectively, and Gea the smallest of all.

By 1235 Ninni Island had been reported secured, although the flagship, *Overton,* did not log this good word until 1400.

Things had gone much better on Gea. At 1130 Gea Island was reported secured.

Although the *Overton* does not mention the unsatisfactory landing beaches, the skipper of the *Manley* logged:

> Commanding Officer of the *Overton* said three of his landing boats were wrecked on the beach and wanted to use two of the *Manley's*. Against my better judgment, I sent him two boats.[59]

There were no Japanese on Ninni Island where the *Overton* was supposed

[59] *Manley* War Diary, 31 Jan. 1944.

to land her troops but there were 130 Japanese on Gehh Island where she did land them. So it was a double complication to land unintentionally on Gehh Island.

Before all the Japanese had been subdued on Gehh Island, it was necessary for the *Overton* to fire her 3-inch guns for about 10 minutes in close fire support on 1 February 1944.

Our losses in securing Gehh, Ninni, and Gea Islands were initially reported as two dead and two wounded, a remarkably small number for wiping out 150 Japanese and securing a vital entrance into Kwajalein lagoon.[60] The chore was over and done on Gea and Ninni by mid-afternoon on 1 February.

SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE LANDINGS ON ENNYLABEGAN (CARLOS) AND ENUBUJ (CARLSON)

The daylight Dog Day landings on CARLSON and CARLOS Islands were to ensure the provision of artillery support for the main assault landing on Kwajalein Island, scheduled for the next day. Additionally, the longer of these two 300-yard-wide islands, CARLOS, rising out of the reef some seven miles northwest of Kwajalein, was considered suitable for supply dumps and repair stations during the main assault.

The Advance Transport Unit, under Captain J. B. McGovern, was told off for this Dog Day task with the 17th Regimental Combat Team and sixty pieces of artillery from the Seventh Infantry Division. Making up the sixty weapons were forty-eight 105-millimeter and twelve 155-millimeter (6.1), all of which were to be emplaced on CARLSON Island just two miles from Kwajalein.

At Makin and Tarawa, the troops on the transports had off-loaded into LCVPs which then sought the correct amtrac which only minutes before had been launched from an LST. The troops then boarded the amtracs to ride into their assault beaches.

At Kwajalein on Dog Day, a modified procedure was used. The transports transferred the assault troops to the designated LST by LCVP. The troops then climbed aboard the correct amtrac in the LST tank deck and then the LSTs launched the fully manned amtracs through the bow doors. This change

[60] *Overton* and *Manley* FLINTLOCK Reports, 8 Feb. 1944 and 16 Feb. 1944, respective. See also War Diaries, TBS Logs.

was made on the basis that it would be much easier to locate a bulky LST in the dark than an individual low freeboard LVT.

However, in the dark of the night of 31 January 1944, the LSTs of the Advance Transport Unit (Tractor Unit One) could not locate in the Troop Transfer Area the particular transport which they had been ordered to lie to nearby. The Troop Transfer Area was an unmarked strip of ocean five to ten miles west of Gea Pass.

At 0544 the flagship of the transports was ready, willing and able to commence the transfer of troops, and the signal "Land the Landing Force" was promulgated by Commander Southern Attack Force (CTF 52), but it was not until well after 0605, dawn having started to break at 0559 (at which time CTF 52 had ordered all the transports to turn on their identification signal lights), that the LSTs started drawing close aboard to their correct transports. The last LST to do this was the LST-272 logged as arriving at 0650, after having been delayed by a steering engine failure at the crucial minute.

Long before the 0712 sunrise, the Fire Support Group was thundering away at Kwajalein, the old battleships *Pennsylvania* and *Mississippi* having opened fire at 0618. At the same time the four destroyers of Fire Support Units One and Four were shelling both CARLOS and CARLSON with over two thousand 5-inch shells; the *New Orleans* was dropping 8-inch shells on CARLSON. Ten minutes before sunrise, about 0702, the first of the assault troop transfers to the LST-224 had been completed, and she headed for the Line of Departure ready to launch her 17 amtracs against Yellow Beach on CARLSON. The underlying, long ocean swell, with its top whipped into a healthy chop by the steady wind, coupled with the fact that some of the LSTs had rigged only one rope net for the troops to climb aboard on, made the troop transfer a slow one. When this was combined with inadequate frapping lines to hold the landing craft close to the sides of the LSTs while unloading, the short minutes of dawn slipped by all too fast.

The last LST was logged moving out of the Troop Transfer Area to her launching position at a late 0745. It had long been apparent that the Navy again was not going to meet its appointed How Hour, 0830, for putting the troops ashore. At 0725, Commander Advance Transport Unit (Captain McGovern) reported to CTF 52 (Rear Admiral Turner) that he was running 30 minutes late. Guided by the experience at Tarawa, CTF 52 at 0748, set How Hour back not 30 minutes but 40 minutes, to 0910. At 0810, Fire Support Units One and Four commenced their pre-assault landing bombard-

ment of CARLOS and CARLSON. The new battleship *Washington* had bombarded the islands the previous day.[61]

This time communication channels were open to the naval aviators from the escort carriers and they were alerted to the change in How Hour and carried out their scheduled air strike on CARLOS Island, commencing at 0858. According to the Joint Amphibious Force report:

> Scheduled fires and air strikes in support of these landings were executed exactly on time. . . .
>
> * * * * *
>
> There was a constant curtain of heavy offensive fire laid down by naval ships of the fire support group and by aircraft.[62]

White Beach Two on CARLOS Island was in a cove near the northwestern end of the island and the Line of Departure was 3,000 yards west of Harvey Point, the northwestern end of CARLOS.

Yellow Beach Two on CARLSON Island stretched across most of the northwestern end of the island.

The first of the four assault waves of amtracs for each island left the Line of Departure at 0851, followed on schedule by the next three waves. The 12 LCIs converted to LCI(FS)s provided close-in fire support, six at each island. The first wave landed on CARLOS at 0910, and on CARLSON at 0915. The latter landing was tardy but not disgracefully so. The delay was reportedly due to the breaking down of a drone boat planned for demolition of underwater obstacles, and the necessity of clearing it out of the way of the advancing amtracs.[63]

> Particularly noted was the effective manner which the LSTs with LVT (A-2)s accomplished this landing operation. There was no difficulty in launching them or in their beaching over the harsh coral reefs surrounding the islands. The fire support by 40mm, rockets and .50 cal. observed coming from special LCIs who went close in to the beach with attack waves, seemed very effective and was impressively mentioned by personnel of the Army who went ashore.[64]

The actual landings on White Beach Two on CARLOS Island were unopposed at the landing beach. With due effort, 26 Japanese were flushed

[61] (a) COMTRANSDIV Four Action Report, 31 Jan.–4 Feb. 1944, Ser 0031, no date, para. 2a; (b) *Leedstown* (APA-56) FLINTLOCK Report, 6 Feb. 1944, pp. 2–4; (c) LST-272 War Diary, 31 Jan. 1944.

[62] (a) CTF 51 FLINTLOCK Report, Encl. (A), p. 3; (b) COMTRANSDIV Four, FLINTLOCK Report, Ser 0031, no date.

[63] COMTRANSDIV Four FLINTLOCK Report, p. 5.

[64] LST-272 War Diary, 31 Jan. 1944.

out, killed or captured, and at 1615 the island was reported secured without loss of life.

The assault waves were also unopposed on CARLSON. The island was reported captured by 1210, likewise without loss of life, although as many as 125 Japanese and Koreans were reported killed or captured.[65]

Before dark, the Army artillery was all ashore and the first landed of the 105-millimeter (4.1″) were logged at an early 1353 as shooting at Kwajalein Island. The first artillery had been smartly landed only an hour before, at 1253, and rapidly and proficiently emplaced.

A major logistic support effort was required at CARLSON by DUKWs outloaded from three beached LSTs to keep these busy guns adequately supplied with ammunition. However, these willing guns fired harassing fire on Kwajalein throughout the night of 31 January–1 February and a total of 29,000 rounds in preparation for and during the assault landing on Kwajalein.[66]

MINESWEEPING

While no Japanese minefields were known to have been layed in the southern half of Kwajalein Lagoon, it was still necessary to clearly establish this fact by minesweeping, or to know the boundaries of any located mine fields, before sending gunfire support ships through Gea Pass to provide close support for the troops landing on the west beaches of Kwajalein Island.

Since photographic reconnaissance had located no fixed guns on either Gea or Ninni Island, it was not considered necessary that these islands guarding Gea Pass be secured before thin skinned minesweepers were ordered through the pass.

At 0638 the minesweeping unit was directed to proceed into the lagoon to commence sweeping, and at 0734, the flagship *Revenge* passed Ninni Island abeam and headed into the lagoon.

No mines were located in the main anchorage in the southern lagoon or in Gea Pass but later a few horned-type anchored mines were swept up in other passes into the lagoon.

The *Revenge* claimed her place in naval history by entering in her War Diary that she was:

[65] *Overton* FLINTLOCK Report, 8 Feb. 1944.

[66] Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls*, p. 230.

the first U.S. Naval surface vessel to enter into a Japanese harbor that had not been captured by them but which had been under their control prior to the beginning of the war.[67]

At 1508 Commander Minesweeping Group was logged coming aboard the *Rocky Mount* to report no mines in any of the anchorage area that we needed for immediate use.

By nightfall, Transport Division Four, Fire Support Unit One, Fire Support Unit Four, the LCI gunboats, the LSTs and several large attack cargo ships were all safely inside the lagoon within the mineswept anchorage. The waters of the lagoon were not smooth, but they were smoother than those outside and more suitable for unloading cargo. And best of all, the ships were free of submarine worries.

About 1700 on Dog Day, Major General Corlett, Commander Southern Landing Force, shifted his forward echelon command post to CARLSON, preparatory for the big tomorrow.

A BIG PLUS FOR DOG DAY

The biggest plus on Dog Day for the Southern Attack Force was the capture of a portfolio of about 75 Japanese secret charts covering the Marshalls and Caroline Islands, as well as selected secret charts of ports in the Marianas, Bonins, and of major naval ports in Japan. These were recovered from a Japanese tugboat stranded on the lagoon side of Gehh Island, the island where our troops had been landed in error by the Advance Transport Unit. If not for this mistaken landing in the early dawn perhaps the tugboat personnel might have destroyed their gold mine of hydrographic information.[68]

As a result of this find, orders for a complete hydrographic survey by our minesweepers of Kwajalein Lagoon were cancelled. The Japanese charts were translated, depth converted to fathoms from meters, redrafted and reproduced in time to be given to ships participating in the CATCHPOLE Operation against Eniwetok ten days later. Additionally, from the same tugboat a great number of code books and recognition signals were among the captured documents.[69]

[67] *Revenge,* War Diary, 31 Jan. 1943.

[68] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR to CINCPAC, 020658 Feb. 1944.

[69] (a) COMFIFTHPHIBCORPS FLINTLOCK Report, 6 Mar. 1944, Vol. 3. Encl. (D); (b) CINCPAC 101909 Feb. 1944.

SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE—THE MAIN ASSAULT KWAJALEIN

Once started, all operations had gone quite well on Dog Day, so at 1638 on 31 January, CTF 52 advised Task Force 52 that the main assault landings would be launched as planned at William Hour—0930—on 1 February 1944, against Beach Red One and Beach Red Two on Kwajalein Island.

During Dog Day at about 1000 (high tide) and again about 1600 (low tide), the men from the Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) in four LCVPs in the morning and in four amtracs in the afternoon had taken a close look at the approaches to the main landing beaches on the western end of Kwajalein Island, while the reef-hugging battleships maintained a continuous fire against the western beaches of Kwajalein. The Japanese seemed unaware of what was taking place. The UDTs carried out their reconnaissance largely as planned and found neither underwater obstacles nor antiboat mines off the assault beaches and, even more luckily, were not fired upon during the morning reconnaissance.[70]

Throughout the daylight of Dog Day, the Fire Support Group worked over the defenses of Kwajalein, each ship having a fair share of specified Japanese defense objectives. Before the day was out, the *Mississippi* and *Pennsylvania* had closed the beach to within 1,500 yards to knock down the concrete pillars fronting the landing beaches.

Some 7,000 projectiles were fired against Kwajalein on 31 January 1944, by the four gallant old battleships (*Pennsylvania, Idaho, New Mexico,* and *Mississippi*), the three heavy cruisers and 11 destroyers of the Fire Support Group of the Southern Attack Force. The battleships did most of their bombardment at moderate ranges of about 12,000 yards, although some of it "close-up." The effect was both impressive to the onlooker and more importantly, effective, as these extracts from official reports indicate:

> The bombardment was practically continuous on 31 January from 0812 to 1730 and on 1 February from 0615 to 1400. In addition the *New Mexico* and the *Murray* fired night interdiction the night of 31 January from 2020 to 0500.[71]
>
> * * * * *
>
> As tracer ammunition streaked through the dark tropic night from CARLSON to Kwajalein and from the ships to BURTON [Ebeye] Island the scene

[70] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR letter, Ser 0034 of 14 Mar. 1944, subj: UDTs in FLINTLOCK.
[71] CTU 52.8.3 (COMBATDIV Three) Action Report, 24 Feb. 1944, p. 1.

resembled a gigantic battle of small boys with Roman candles, with terrific explosions shattering the silence and many fires blazing up to reveal a scene of complete desolation.[72]

* * * * *

At Kwajalein, a battleship was shelling the beach in preparation for the landing. The Admiral was not satisfied with the effect and particularly so in that the battleship was hesitant in closing the range. In much anger, he signalled to the general effect: 'Why should you with your 12" guns be afraid of the enemy's 6" cannon? Close the range to 1500 yards'.[73]

DOG DAY AIR BOMBARDMENT

The naval air bombardment of Kwajalein Island had been curtailed on the afternoon of Dog Day due to foul flying weather, of which a low cloud ceiling and rain squalls were the main ingredients. However, Carrier Task Group 58.1, with *Enterprise, Yorktown* and *Belleau Wood,* and Carrier Support Group 52.9, with *Manila Bay, Coral Sea,* and *Corregidor* had flown 102 bombing sorties over Kwajalein Island before their operations were called off.

The result of air and gun bombardment was to fill the island with bomb craters and shell holes, wreck nearly all structures and scatter them around, uproot the palms and destroy all the foliage, and to make it difficult for men or vehicles to move very rapidly from here to there because of rubble and holes.

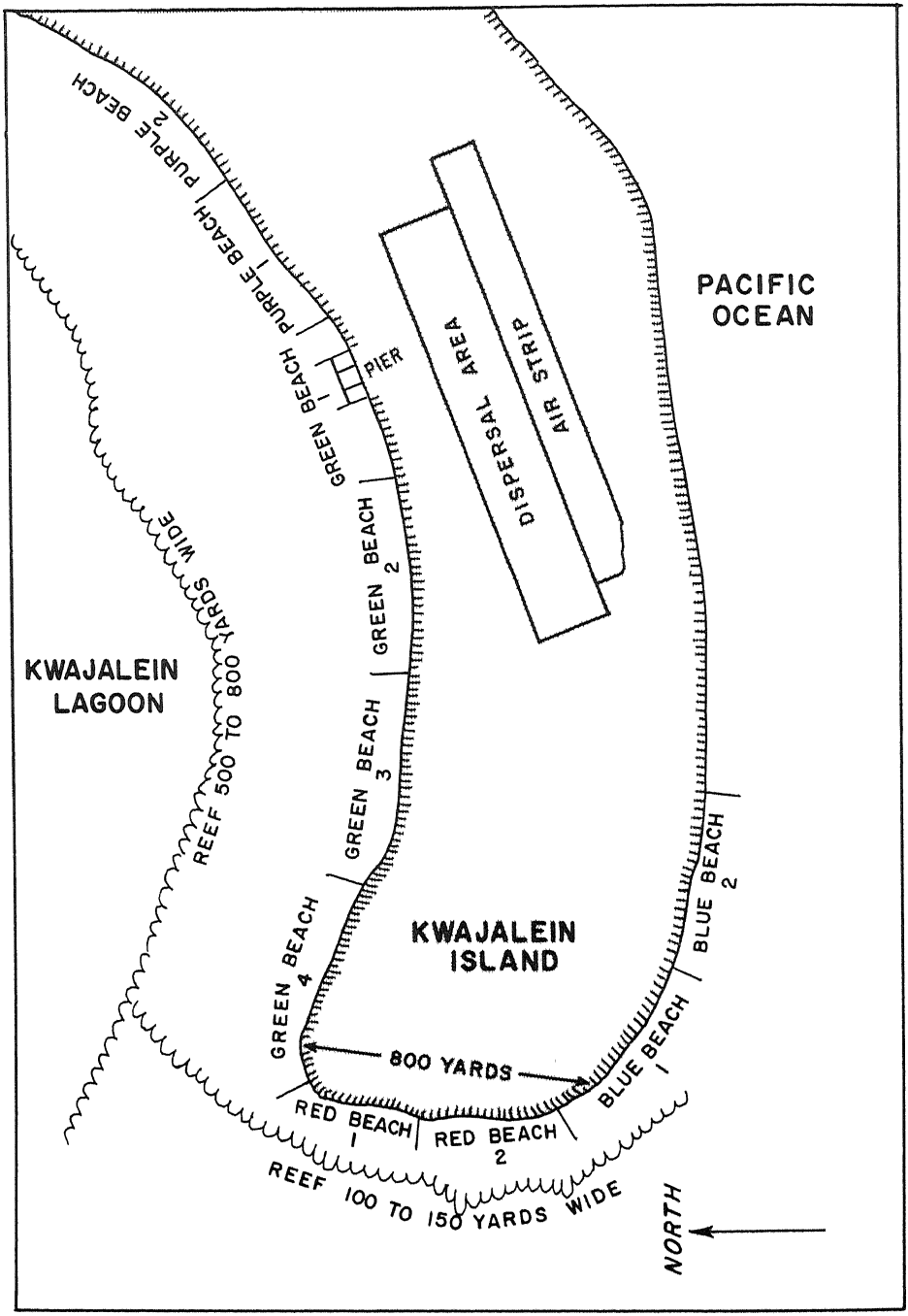
LANDING THE ASSAULT WAVES—KWAJALEIN

The assault troops were ferried from the large transports to the LSTs during daylight on Dog Day, and so were all ready to climb aboard their amtracs and be launched through the bow doors of the eight LSTs early on Dog Day plus one.

Morning was just breaking, when, according to the *Minneapolis* TBS Log, at 0601 on Dog Day plus one, 1 February 1944, Captain Knowles, Commander Transport Group and veteran of Guadalcanal and Tarawa, was ordered by the big boss, Rear Admiral Turner, "To take charge and 'Land the Landing Force.' "

[72] COMCRUDIV Six War Diary, 2 Feb. 1944.

[73] Hogaboom Interview, 15 May 1967. General Hogaboom was former Military Operations Officer, Staff Commander Fifth Amphibious Force from 2 November 1943 to 14 April 1944.



Landing beaches on Kwajalein Island.

This signal to a subordinate to "take charge" was sent because Rear Admiral Turner had learned through experience in WATCHTOWER, TOENAILS and GALVANIC that the actual landing operations must be placed squarely upon the shoulders of the Transport Group Commander.[74] However, the Transport Group Commander still lacked adequate rank, a flagship with proper communication facilities, and more importantly, an ample and trained staff.

Commander Southern Transport Group, who noted in his report that he had received 55 directives, orders, and memoranda relative to FLINTLOCK, began his chores in the midst of an avalanche of efforts by others. His superior's Action Report noted:

> . . . smoke from fires on the beach, smoke from ships' gunfire, and dust and debris from explosions almost obscured the western end of the island. From this time on, until the first wave landed, air strikes by carrier planes and Army B-24 heavy bombers, and scheduled fires by surface ships were carried out exactly on schedule in a magnificent demonstration of accurate timing and coordination.[75]

The lack of any semblance of Japanese gunfire towards the Transport Area permitted the LSTs to launch their amtracs about 7,500 yards from the beach and the amtracs to move up to the Line of Departure 5,000 yards from Red Beach One and Red Beach Two with a minimum of confusion, delay, and apprehension.

How Hour on Kwajalein was 0930 and for a change the Navy made it on time. The 84 new amtracs LVT-2s and LVT-A(1) (tanks) made the two and a half miles from the Line of Departure at a speed of five knots despite the considerable swell which was wetting down the troops, and making them anxious to be on dry land.

Regimental Combat Team 184 was on the left flank and Regimental Combat Team 32 was on the right flank, both from the Seventh Infantry Division. Wave One had 16 amtracs carrying troops and 16 amphibious tanks. The early waves were supported by the fire support LCIs and shepherded by LCCs (Landing Craft Control) on each flank. The wave space was four minutes, and the four amtrac waves all arrived on or ahead of time and landed without casualties.

Born of the confidence engendered in GALVANIC, big ship and destroyer gunfire support this time continued until two minutes before touchdown of

[74] Knowles.

[75] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR FLINTLOCK Report, 25 Feb. 1944, Encl. (A), p. 5.

the amtracs, when the gunfire lifted inland. The LCI(FS)s opened with their rockets at 1,100 yards from the beach, and let go their second salvo when only 800 yards offshore. They continued firing their machine guns up to the last minute before the troops reached the beach. Added to this rain of small gunfire, the amphibious tanks which numbered 16 in the lead wave added their best firing efforts.

The pesky current tended to set the amtracs towards the south, but as far as is known, all landed on their designated beaches although bunched toward the southern half of both Red Beach One and Red Beach Two.

As was later reported:

> The first wave landed on schedule, exactly 0930. Surf was light and no obstacles or mines were encountered on the reef or beach. . . . Our troops advanced to the eastward along the long axis of the island a distance of about 1300 yards. . . . About 11,000 troops, 42 medium tanks and 6 light tanks fitted with flame throwers, in addition to adequate supply of ammunition, food and water were landed on Kwajalein the first day of the main landing.[76]
>
> * * * * *
>
> The LST-LVT assault team worked smoothly again and these LVTs had no great difficulties in surmounting the coral reefs on Red Beach 1 and 2. Army personnel were impressed by the quality and quantity of Naval gunfire.[77]

At 0940 just before the fourth amtrac wave was landing, the Beachmasters at both Red Beach One and Red Beach Two reported that hydrographic conditions in the beach approaches were such that troops in the LCVP waves would have to be transferred to amtracs for expeditious landing, since the LCVPs would not be able to get close to the shore before grounding. A rendezvous 700–800 yards off the beaches was arranged. Many, many transfers were carried out. In general, LCMs stranded about a hundred yards from the beach line and the tanks made it from there in on their own, but an unfortunate few were drowned out.

Despite these handicaps, the landing of the assault troops, their tanks, equipment, and logistic support proceeded steadily. No land mines were encountered in the immediate beach area.

By noon on 2 February, logistic support was being landed generally over Blue Beach One or Green Beach Four, rather than over the Red beaches. Before dark that day, all logistic support was going ashore over lagoon beaches or by transshipment to LVTs.

The Kwajalein lagoon beaches were no bargain basement for large land-

[76] *Ibid.* Encl. (C), p. 4.

[77] LST-272 War Diary, 1 Feb. 1944.

ing craft, as the Commander of an LST Group reported:

> Beaching conditions are bad. Coral heads are plentiful. Ships standing in to beach invariably ground on a coral head with 18 feet of water all around. As tide ebbs, the coral punctures the bottom. The pontoon causeways carried by the LSTs proved invaluable. Without them, unloading would have been a serious problem.[78]

Many LCMs also had their bottoms punctured by coral heads. The short steep choppy seas inside the lagoon slowed boats down tremendously and gave their crews a drubbing. Everything inside these craft was wet, including crews, passengers, and cargo.

Despite these logistic support slowdowns, the landing operation went well. As Commander Southern Transport Group reported:

> Dispositions listed in the Landing Attack Order No. 2–44 were closely followed. The plan was executed as written, with minor unimportant variations, and worked well.

SLOW BUT STEADY ADVANCE

The troops ashore moved ahead steadily. Their progress was slowed by the "resist to the death tactics" of the brave Japanese and by a sound desire to avoid heavy casualties.

The seagoing amphibians' task of air, gunfire, and logistic support continued at Kwajalein until mid-afternoon, 4 February, when the island was reported secure.

That afternoon, Rear Admiral Turner broadcast by TBS:

> Commander Task Force Fifty-Two has the pleasure to announce that our troops of the 7th Army Division completed capture of Kwajalein Island at 1525 today.[79]

NAVAL GUNFIRE SUPPORT

The Army was pleased with the naval gunfire support received, and thereafter was the staunch advocate of seagoing artillery, as this section of the Seventh Infantry's report indicates:

> Reports from the various Infantry Battalion Commanders indicate that without exception, all call fire missions were handled properly and to the complete satisfaction of all supported units.[80]

[78] COMLSTGRP 37 War Diary, 4–8 Feb. 1944.

[79] *Minneapolis* TBS LOG.

[80] Seventh Infantry Division, FLINTLOCK Report, 6 Mar. 1944, p. 16.

> It has been estimated by the Commanding General, Seventh Infantry Division Artillery, that eighty percent of the destruction done to heavily fortified positions was a direct result of Naval gunfire.

The Naval report was equally enthusiastic:

> These islands showed nothing but devastation. All emplacements or shelters above ground had evidence of hits or were completely destroyed. The entire island looked as if it had been picked up to 20,000 feet then dropped. The devastation on the landing beach was so great that it was almost impossible for tanks to cross the beach. All beach defenses were completely destroyed. It was almost impossible to tell where the sea wall around a portion of the beach had stood.[81]

In all, 3,926 tons of naval shells were fired by the Southern Attack Force and 2,667 tons by the Northern Attack Force.

By 5 February 1944, the few Japanese left alive on Kwajalein Island were killed, had committed suicide, or were captured.

The Japanese had had a small craft repair base on North Gugewe, storehouses and ammunition dumps on Bigej, besides the seaplane base on Ebeye. These and all other islands in the southern half of Kwajalein Atoll were cleared out by nightfall of 5 February.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

By this date, the future Secretary of the Navy, James W. Forrestal, had personally visited Kwajalein and had said he was more than pleased with what had been accomplished.

Departure of ships from Kwajalein Atoll for the South Pacific began on 4 February. By 6 February, one headquarters ship, 13 attack transports, four attack cargo ships, and three landing ships (dock) with 216 amtracs screened by seven destroyers had departed for early scheduled operations in the South Pacific.

On 25 February 1944, Rear Admiral Turner departed Kwajalein Atoll for Pearl, with one more victory notch in his belt.

As he headed for the barn, Rear Admiral Turner wrote:

> Over-emphasis of certain problems which experience at Tarawa had exaggerated in the minds of those concerned had caused general doubt regarding

[81] Naval Gunfire Officer, Headquarters V Amphibious Corps, Naval Gunfire Report on the FLINTLOCK Operation, Ser 00671 of 7 Mar. 1944, p. 7.

the effectiveness of our weapons and tactics, and much time and effort was expended on dubious and fruitless schemes.

More importantly he wrote:

The practical cooperative spirit manifested toward each other by the officers and men of all Services and arms is above praise, and should inspire optimism and confidence in the future of our combined arms.[82]

A Marine officer who served first on the Staff of Major General Holland M. Smith, USMC, and then on the Staff of Rear Admiral (later Vice Admiral) Turner wrote of the latter:

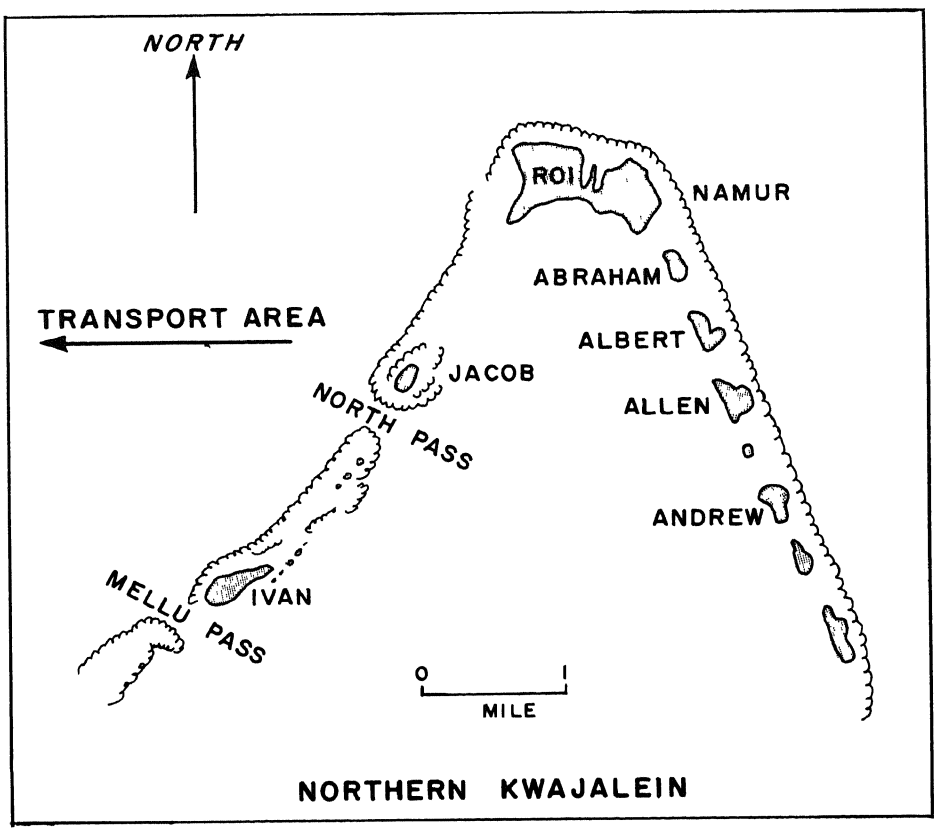
I truly saw him in action, night and day, afloat and ashore.
Admiral Turner had an almost unbelievable capacity for work. He drove himself without mercy, and he expected and demanded the same of those around him. I never saw him relax or take his ease.[83]

[82] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR FLINTLOCK Report, Encl. (E), para 2a and p. 10
[83] Hogaboom, 15 May 1967

CHAPTER XX

Roi-Namur and the Frosting on the Cake—Eniwetok

FLINTLOCK had some of the attributes of a three-ring circus. The Commander Expeditionary Force, of necessity, directed the greater part of his attention to the tactical operations within his range of vision and under



Northern Kwajalein.

his immediate tactical command. Accordingly, the amphibious operations at Roi-Namur, Majuro, and Eniwetok are described only in modest detail, compared with Kwajalein where Rear Admiral Turner carried the ball.

While Roi-Namur and Kwajalein were only 40 miles apart, they were well out of 1944 voice radio range. So the assault operations at Roi-Namur were well beyond kibitzing range had there been any disposition on the part of the Expeditionary Force Commander, Rear Admiral Turner, to carry on such kibitzing. Vice Admiral Spruance, flying his flag in the heavy cruiser *Indianapolis,* was present off Roi-Namur with the flagship providing gun bombardment support. But Commander Fifth Fleet, observing everything and hearing everything, was keeping the normal tight button on his lips. Rear Admiral Conolly, Commander Group Three, Fifth Amphibious Force, and Commander Northern Attack Force during FLINTLOCK, was on his own for his first amphibious operation in the Pacific. As he remarked frequently thereafter, he had an entirely free hand.[1]

There was the natural competition between the Northern Attack Force (TF 53) and the Southern Attack Force (TF 52) to complete first the conquest of their assigned half of the Kwajalein Atoll. This race was won handily by Rear Admiral Conolly, the Northern Attack Force, and the Marines of the Fourth Division under Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC.

Several amphibious problems arose during the seizure of the outlying islands by the Northern Attack Force on Dog Day, and again on Dog Day plus one during the launching of the assault from within the lagoon. Since these amphibious experiences help form the stepping stones leading to later successes in the Pacific amphibious campaigns directed by Rear Admiral Turner, they will be briefly related.

It might be observed at the outset that the complicated Landing Plan of the Northern Attack Force depended upon good communications. These would not exist at the amtrac level due to the grounding out of radio sets installed in the amtracs by the salt spray from the choppy lagoon waves.

ASSAULT ON ROI-NAMUR

The beaches of the islands guarding the passes to the northern part of Kwajalein Lagoon and the main passes themselves were not mined by the Japanese. There were no defensive anti-submarine nets nor booms in the

[1] Interview with Admiral Richard L. Conolly, USN (Ret.), 11 May 1961, together with letters of 13 Jan. 1961 and 1 May 1961. Hereafter Conolly.

passes. There were neither artillery nor emplaced machine guns on the guarding islands.

The Japanese defenses of Roi-Namur, according to our post-assault studies, were organized around four strong points on Roi Island and three strong points on Namur Island. Most importantly, these strong points were all on the ocean beaches of the islands. The Marine assault plan wisely called for the assaults to be made on the lagoon side of both islands. Here, initially, there had been some determined Japanese positioned to destroy the assaulting troops at the beaches, but their largest emplaced ordnance was only a 50-caliber machine gun.[2]

PHASE I—SEIZURE OF OFF-LYING ISLANDS

The Initial Tractor Group of the Northern Attack Force (Captain Armand J. Robertson, Commander), containing nine LSTs, carried the essential amtracs for the assault landings on the off-lying islands south from Roi-Namur While in Hawaii they were at Nawiliwili Bay in the northwestern island of Kauai, separated by 100 miles from their Task Force Commander. Upon arrival from San Diego late on 17 January, they had been reluctantly positioned at Nawiliwili Bay because of lack of berthing space in the Pearl Harbor area, the available Pearl Harbor berthing space being pre-empted by the larger amphibious ships of the Northern Attack Force and by all the ships and landing craft of the Southern Attack Force.

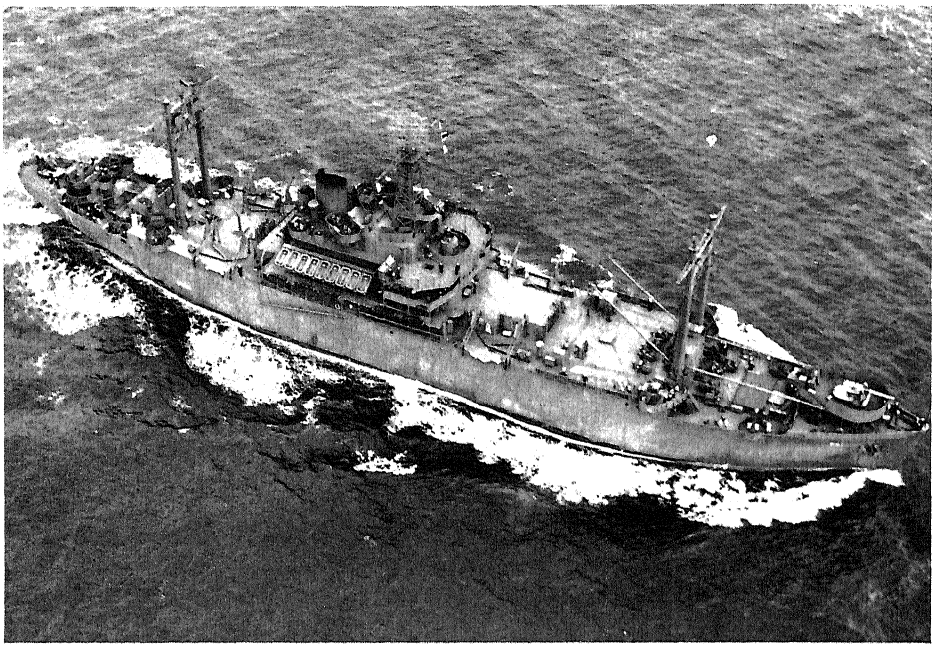
A real problem arose, in these LSTs of Task Group 53.7, when the final effective operation orders of Commander Northern Attack Force, as well as those of Commander Fifth Fleet and Commander Expeditionary Force, were not received by them until delivered by officer messenger upon their arrival at Nawiliwili Bay on 17 January 1944. Departure of these landing ships from Hawaiian waters for Roi-Namur was scheduled for the afternoon of 19 January, and as their reports indicated:

> It was impossible to digest the huge quantity of orders received and to formulate and disseminate all of the operation orders of this command prior to sailing.[3]

As a result, the vital appendices and annexes to the flotilla's own operational orders for the LSTs had to be disseminated while enroute to the

[2] Engineer V Amphibious Corps Study and Report of Japanese Defenses of Kwajalein Atoll, 1–10 Feb. 1944, 15 Feb 1944.

[3] COMLSTFLOT 13, War Diary, 19 Jan. 1944.



80-G-85045

USS Appalachian (*AGC-1*), *flagship of Rear Admiral R. L. Conolly, at Roi-Namur.*

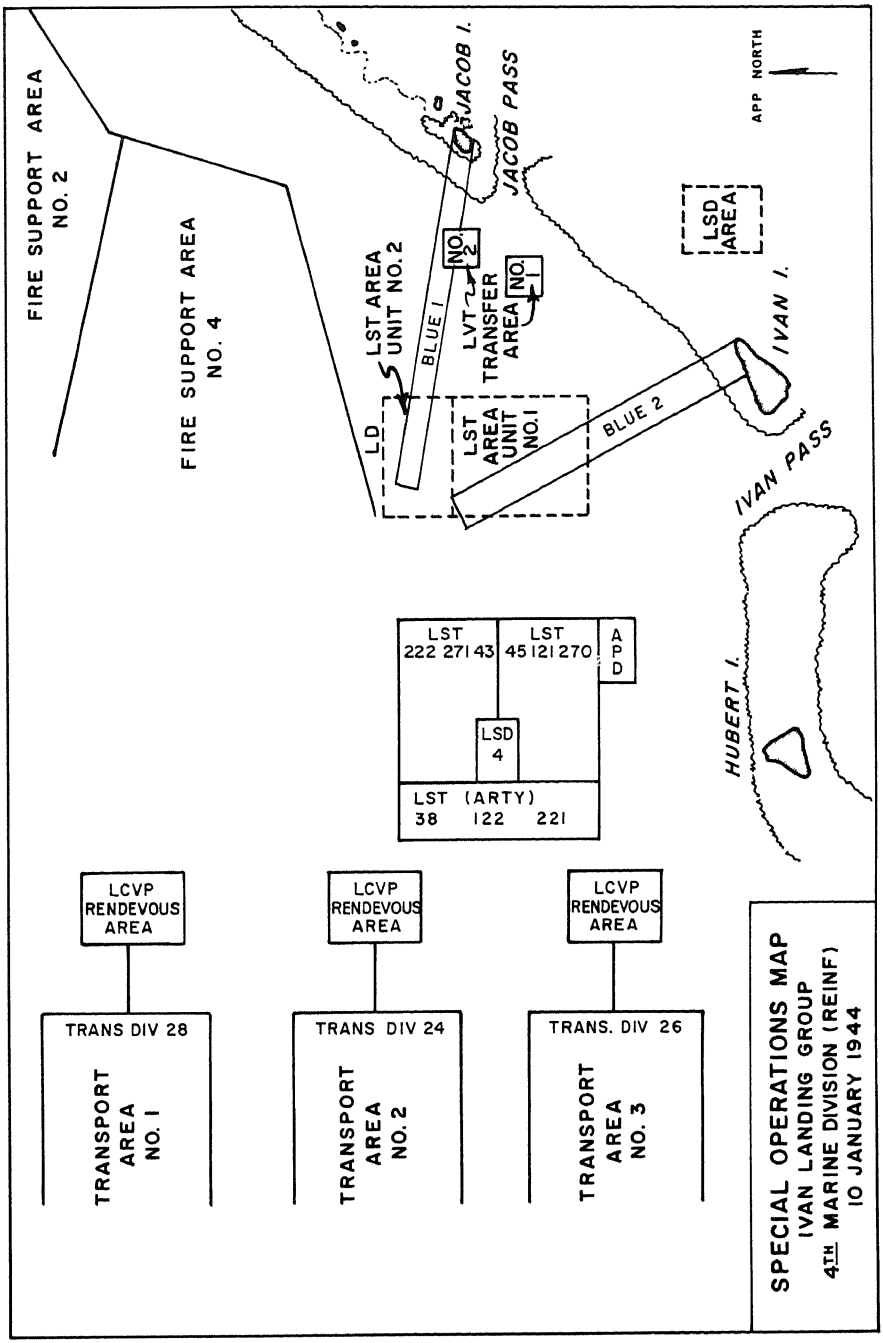
Marshalls. Since the LSTs departed Hawaii before the TF 53 main body, there was to be no opportunity for a discussion of the orders with CTF 53 or his Staff before implementing them.

The primary task of the Initial Tractor Group was to establish a regiment of Marine artillery on the four designated small islands within artillery range of all of Roi and Namur.

The assault plan for the initial assault on the small islands to the south and west of Roi and the south and east of Namur followed the GALVANIC pattern of transferring the Marines via LCVPs from the large transports directly to the amtracs just launched from the nine LSTs. This pattern creates problems when carried out during darkness.

The amtracs, as soon as launched in the dark of the night, were under orders to assemble close aboard the LSTs from which they were launched to receive the assault troops from the transports arriving in the nearby Transport Area about 0500.

The transports were from temporarily and newly formed Transport Divi-



Landing Plan for IVAN and JACOB Islands, Kwajalein Atoll.

sion 26 (Captain A. D. Blackledge) with a combat landing team from the 25th Marines embarked. The LSTs were from the newly formed LST Flotilla 13 (Captain A. J. Robertson).

The Line of Departure was five thousand yards from IVAN and JACOB Islands. The Transport Area was five miles westward from the Line of Departure (see chart, page 805). The *Phelps* (DD-360), carrying of primary boat control officer, Captain E. B. McLean, was at the Line of Departure.

Captain Robertson wrote:

> It is the decision of this Command to arrive at the LST Area at 0345, 31 January, to accord an interval of 5 hours and 15 minutes prior to the hour of attack. . . .
>
> It is felt that this time margin is necessary because this operation will be the first in which LSTs have carried LVT(2)s on their main decks. . . .[4]

In this connection, it should be noted that the rated capacity of the LST elevators which would lower the amtracs from the main decks to the tank deck was 22,400 pounds. The amtracs with armor protection weighed 25,400 pounds, so the elevators would be operating at better than ten percent overload. How long they would stand up under this overload, and the problems which then might arise, were anybody's guess.

The LSTs arrived in the LST Area at 0345 and the transports arrived in the Transport Area shortly after 0500. At 0345 the LSTs began launching their amtracs. How Hour for landing the leading assault waves was set for 0900. All ships and craft drifted to the westward due to the westerly set of the current and had to be on the move at regular intervals to regain position. The Flotilla War Diary had this entry:

> Because of wind and current, considerable difficulty was experienced in keeping LSTs in proper position in assigned area. The necessity of keeping LVTs close aboard until arrival of assault troops from transports added to the difficulty.

The difficult boating conditions led to unallowed-for delays in transferring the Marines to the amtracs, so that it was not until:

> 0800 (approx.) Assault troops from TRANSDIV 26 started arriving at LVT(2)s.[5]

In connection with the weather during this period, the logs of the transports and LST's indicate that the wind was blowing 15 to 20 knots from the

[4] *Ibid.*, 16 Jan. 1944.

[5] (a) *Ibid.*, 31 Jan. 1944; (b) COMTRANSDIV 26 FLINTLOCK Report.

northeast. (The *Appalachian* logged 19 knots from 056° at 0530.) The goodly swell which ran three to four feet was having its top whipped off and onto those manning or riding the landing craft. The day was overcast and there were rain squalls.

THE ASSAULT COMMENCES

The first islands to be seized were IVAN (Mellu) and JACOB (Ennuebing) southwest of Roi Island. Since these islands had no visible life on them, they were shelled at a distance of only 2,000–3,000 yards by destroyers beginning "with the arrival of good light at about 0645" and at even closer ranges by the fire support LCIs.[6] Additionally, they were bombed by carrier aircraft before the landings. Later it was learned that there was no defensive Japanese armament larger than a light machine gun on these islands although the *Phelps* in her Action Report "observed enemy battery in area 910 (JACOB), Ennuebing. Took it under fire, and scored direct hits."

There was no visible response to the initial gun and bomb attacks.

Considerable delay occurred during the transfer of the troops to the amtracs, since:

> On our arrival at LST-43, we found their elevator had become jammed and we just stood by for about two hours.[7]

After the amtracs had the troops aboard, the vehicles made slow headway against the wind and swell on the run in to the Line of Departure marked by the destroyer *Phelps*. This was a repeat performance of the experience at Betio Island in the Gilberts and indicated how tricky time schedules for amtracs can be in a choppy sea. One Marine platoon leader noted:

> Because of the high sea, it was necessary to stop frequently and let the tractors pump out; therefore progress was slow.[8]

At 0903, How Hour, which had been set for 0900, was retarded by Rear Admiral Conolly to 0930. But the actual delay turned out to be far more than half an hour. It was 0952 before the amtracs landed on Beach Blue One on northerly JACOB. From the author's study of the available TBS and other records, it is believed that it was 1034 before the amtracs crawled up

[6] *Phelps* (DD–360) and *Johnston* (DD–557) Action Reports, 7 Feb. 1944 and 3 Feb. 1944, respectively.

[7] COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS, Report of 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 12 Apr. 1944, Encl. (A), p. 1 to CO's report.

[8] *Ibid.*, Encl. (B), p. 1 of CO's report.

on southerly IVAN on the opposite side of the island from Beach Blue Two, although the Marine's history of the Marshalls' operation indicates this occurred at 0955.

In connection with the diversity of statements on this minor point of a hazardous landing, the Commanding General Northern Landing Force, Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC, reported that the landing on IVAN was not until "about 1050." Commander IVAN Landing Group (Brigadier General J. L. Underhill, USMC), the officer in immediate command, reported that the landing at IVAN took place "about 1030." [9]

The problem at southerly IVAN was not a minor one. One of the leading tractors headed for IVAN's Blue Beach Two capsized in the rough surf. Perhaps this was due to its grounding on a large coral head or other irregularity of the beach approach just as a roller hit the tractor. Sensibly, the amtrac movement was halted after this casualty and, in time, the lead waves diverted to Mellu Pass south of IVAN and thence on to the calmer waters of the lagoon beaches of IVAN. This all took time and makes a 0955 landing seem impracticable.

The following TBS messages originated principally by the Air Observer or Air Coordinator and logged at the time tell the interesting story of the landings on IVAN.

0932. 3 LCI approaching Beach Blue 2. 1,000 yards from Beach Blue 2.

0936. CTF 53 to COMFIRESUPPORT Unit Five (Captain McLean in *Phelps*) What is delaying IVAN attack?

0937. LCIs delivering very accurate results on Beach Blue Two.

0938. Fighters now strafing Beach Blue Two. We are at 100 foot altitude.

0942. Air Coordinator reports [boats] are not yet on beach of IVAN and he is waiting before strafing.

0949. LCIs still firing on Beach Blue Two at approximately 800 yards offshore. LVT and LVT(2) have made no attempt as yet to head for Beach Blue Two.

1003. Fighters are now strafing Beach Blue Two. 17 LVT(A)s standing off beach at IVAN.

1008. There is one LVT which is upside down completely capsized approximately 100 yards Northwest off Beach Blue Two.

1010. Air Coordinator reports first wave of boats have beached on IVAN Island and some have shoved off again.

[9] (a) CTF 53 FLINTLOCK Report, 23 Feb. 1944, Encls. (A) and (B), TBS Log; (b) COMDESRON One FLINTLOCK Report, 9 Feb. 1944; (c) Marine Monograph, *The Marshalls*, p. 44; (d) COMGENFOURTHMARDIV, Commander Northern Landing Force, FLINTLOCK Report, 17 Mar. 1944, Encl. (C), IVAN Landing Group Report, p. 1.

5 LVT(2) standing off Beach Blue Two at approximately 200 yards. Are heading toward beach. Seem to be floating around in areas of LVTs.
Approximately 50–100 yards off Beach Blue Two. Crew of capsized tractor appear to be having no trouble and are wading in toward beach.

This Air Coordinator report was soon corrected by the Air Observer.

1015. No boats have landed on Beach Blue Two. Am at altitude of 30 feet 100 yards offshore. Boats are approximately 200 yards to the Northwest and 5 LVTs approximately 100 yards off the beach at the south.

1026. Another LVT(A) has gone in on northwest side of IVAN and has picked up crew of capsized LVT. This LVT appears to be having no trouble at all with the surf.

1034. 4 LVT(2) in uniform wave landed on South Beach of IVAN.

1038. Second wave of LVT(2) landing on South Beach of IVAN.

Many of the 19 Japanese on IVAN and the 16 Japanese on JACOB chose the easy way out by committing suicide. Others fought bravely against overwhelming force. Best of all, two prisoners were taken on IVAN and three on JACOB. JACOB was reported secured by 1042 and IVAN by 1145.

As soon as JACOB Island which guarded North Pass was secured, minesweepers proceeded into the lagoon through North Pass and swept the approaches to the important lagoon beaches on Roi-Namur and the anchorage area for the large transports. This should have tipped off the Japanese as to the beaches where the assault on Roi-Namur would take place. The minesweepers warned the *Phelps* that there was only 15 feet of water in North Pass, so the *Phelps* and other destroyers used Mellu Pass. The minesweepers also alerted all the amphibians that the lagoon had numerous coral heads to plague them.

PHASE II—THE ASSAULT SHIFTS EASTWARD

Able Hour, the time for amtrac touch down on ALLEN and ALBERT Islands southeast of Namur, was planned for 1130. Baker Hour, the time for the last assault landing on Dog Day was planned for 1600 at ABRAHAM Island. ABRAHAM Island was only 450 yards southeast from Namur. With these islands in our possession, Marine artillery could be emplaced to provide close gunfire support during and after the assault landing, as well as deny to the Japanese the opportunity to harass from the flank the assault waves going into Roi-Namur on Dog Day plus one.

THE WEATHER AGAIN

The basic plan called for the eastern island landings at Able Hour (1130) to use both (1) the amtracs which carried the Reserve for the IVAN and JACOB landings and (2) the amtracs released by the IVAN and JACOB Landing Teams after their landing task was completed. Because the initial western island landings ran up to 90 minutes behind the original schedule and because the amtracs again would have to buck the easterly trade wind sea for even longer distances (7–8 miles) to reach ALLEN and ALBERT further to the eastward, it was a certainty that it would be mid-afternoon before these important Dog Day landings would take place. This meant that some of the Marines participating would have been afloat in the uncomfortable long trade wind ground swells since before sunrise. Necessarily, the Reserve for IVAN and JACOB had been boated right after the initial assault waves.

Not only did stomachs have to contend with the swell, but the men and their equipment were continuously wet down by spray whipped off the crests of the swell by the healthy breeze.

Regassing of the amtracs was planned after the initial assault on IVAN (Mellu) and JACOB (Ennuebing) Islands, and prior to the assault on the eastern group of small islands southeast of Namur. This precaution was born of the experience at Tarawa, where numerous amtracs had reported themselves out of gas at a critical moment after the initial assault landing.

PHASE II—THE PRIMARY CONTROL SHIP MOVES INTO THE LAGOON

Rear Admiral Conolly's Operation Order provided:

> *PHELPS* When the minesweepers are directed to proceed into lagoon, follow with and behind LCI's of Fire Support Unit Five in close support of minesweepers. . . .[10]

The lead minesweepers began sweeping the approaches to North Pass about 0950 and continued through the pass and across the lagoon. As they approached the eastern islands, they reported they were under fire from these islands. The *Phelps* had not followed the minesweepers through North Pass in close support because of the necessity of continuing to despatch the amtrac waves toward IVAN and JACOB. The fourth wave to IVAN was

[10] CTF 53 Amphibious Attack Order A158–44 (Initial Landing), 8 Jan. 1944, Appendix 3, para. 3(e).

logged as not being dispatched until a tardy 1100. The *Phelps,* however, by about 1107, had moved eastward promptly from the initial Line of Departure closer to North Pass and to the new LVT Transfer Areas established for assault on the eastward islands. This put her in a better position both to support the minesweepers and to control the upcoming second assembly of the amtrac waves for the assault on ALBERT and ALLEN.[11]

About 1156 the *Phelps* was directed by Rear Admiral Conolly to enter the lagoon via Mellu (IVAN) Pass, rather than via North (JACOB) Pass, because of the 15-foot depth limitation reported by the minesweepers.

However, it was 1230, and after an hour and a half of effort in assembling the amtracs for the second assault phase, before the *Phelps* dashed off southward to Mellu Pass, taking with her Captain E. R. McLean, Commander Destroyer Squadron One and senior officer in the boat control organization. The *Phelps* logged entering the lagoon at 1253, far too late to participate in any gun battle with the eastern islands in protection of the minesweepers, and far too soon to have completed the assembly of all the amtracs for the second assault phase.[12]

The Standby Control Ship, the 30-ton landing craft LCC-33, normally carried aboard the transport *Callaway,* having completed her primary duty of marking the center of the JACOB Line of Departure, also shoved off from the LVT Transfer Areas, and entered the lagoon via North Pass. Her orders were:

> LCC-33 will act as primary control boat in event *Phelps* is not able to perform the duties. In the event *Phelps* is disabled as Control Boat, LCC-33 would be Senior Control Boat and take action accordingly. LCC-32 would act if *Phelps* and LCC-33 were both disabled.[13]

Since these contingencies did not arise, LCC-33 proceeded to take position in the center of the Line of Departure for ALBERT which was within the lagoon and her next assigned station.

Commander IVAN Landing Group, Brigadier General James L. Underhill, USMC, was on board the SC-997. She was designated the Inshore Headquarters Ship, so that close touch could be maintained with the landing teams. This small ship, unfortunately, did not get on the distribution list of CTG 53.9 for his attack order for the initial landing (Op Order 1–44). The SC-997 made no action report. She kept no war diary. Her ship's log for January 1944 and February 1944 cannot be located by the Bureau of

[11] (a) COMINERON Two, FLINTLOCK Report, 12 Feb. 1944; (b) COMDESRON One Action Report, 23 Feb. 1944; (c) YMS-262 War Diary, Jan. 1944.

[12] *USS Phelps* Ship's Log.

[13] CTG 53.9 Amphibious Attack Order 1–44, 11 Jan. 1944. Annex B, paras 2, 5(b).

Naval Personnel. Hence her side of the unhappy story of the next several hours remains untold.

As the *Phelps* headed south for Mellu Pass, and as she passed by the SC-997, she announced to that ship by bull horn:

> Am going to support mine sweepers. Take over.

Brigadier General Underhill's reports indicate that he was plenty unhappy about this turn of events.[14] The SC-997 at best could cover only four radio circuits versus twelve in the *Phelps*. Several of her radio circuits developed troubles. Further, LVT Transfer Areas One and Two were not marked by buoys and there was no provision in the orders of Commander Initial Transport Group (CTG 53.9), Captain A. D. Blackledge, for this marking. So the Phase Two amtracs had no fixed marker to rally around when they finished their chores at IVAN and JACOB.

These two conditions led to a rapidly developing lack of control and concentration of the amtracs. To make matters worse, most of the amtracs in the Transfer Areas set off to follow the *Phelps* into the lagoon via Mellu Pass, because they knew that *Phelps* was to mark the Line of Departure for ALBERT and ALLEN. Other amtracs needing gas had to push on westward all the way to the LSTs to pick up this important fuel and were not always able to get it from the first LST they reached and asked for it.

Amtracs were going every which way, largely in accordance with the individual judgments of the Marines who were driving the vehicles. The SC-997 cruised here and there and gradually rounded up the majority of the amtracs. CTF 53 and the Fourth Marine Division both logged the first organized wave of amtracs as passing through North Pass en route to the Line of Departure at 1305, or just after the *Phelps* had moved through Mellu Pass. At 1315 CTF 53 retarded Able Hour from 1130 to 1430.

The *Phelps* did not settle down as Primary Control Ship at the Phase Two Line of Departure, about 3,600 yards from ALLEN and ALBERT, until 1342. She immediately recommended the further retardation of How Hour from 1430 to 1500, some three and a half hours later than the initial plan had hoped for. Even this How Hour was not met. Despite some frantic efforts, the amtracs did not take off from the Line of Departure until 1435 and did not land on ALLEN until 1515 and on ALBERT until 1517.[15]

[14] CGFOURTHMARDIV FLINTLOCK Report, Encl. (C), para. 9.

[15] (a) *Ibid.*, Encl. (C), and endorsements thereon; (b) Commanding Officer, 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion FLINTLOCK Report, and endorsements thereon; (c) CTG 53.9 Attack Order 1–44 and Action Report, (d) COMDESRON One, Action Report and War Diary; (e) *Phelps* Action Report; (f) LCC-33 kept no log, and made no action report; (g) COMTRANSDIV 26 FLINTLOCK Report, 18 Feb. 1944.

As one Marine officer stated:

> The principal causes of these delays were a breakdown in boat control and failure of LVT(2)s to carry out orders.[16]

During all these hours, the destroyers of the Northern Support Group, and the aircraft from the support carriers had shelled and bombed, and reshelled and rebombed ALBERT and ALLEN. In addition, the fire support LCIs firing rockets and the tank-type amtracs prepared the beaches at close ranges by vigorous rocket and gunfire.

Despite all this, a small number of Japanese were still alive and fighting when the Marines moved ashore. Thirty-four Japanese had to be killed before the two islands were reported secured.

Moving smartly to the northward, the Marines seized ABRAHAM Island just before sunset against modest resistance from the six Japanese defending it. ANDREW Island, just south of ALLEN Island, had been secured earlier, and at 1915, the Dog Day assault landings were over with all objectives secured.

The major objectives—Roi and Namur—would be assaulted on the morrow. At 2015 Major General Schmidt reported that he expected to carry out the main assault on schedule.[17]

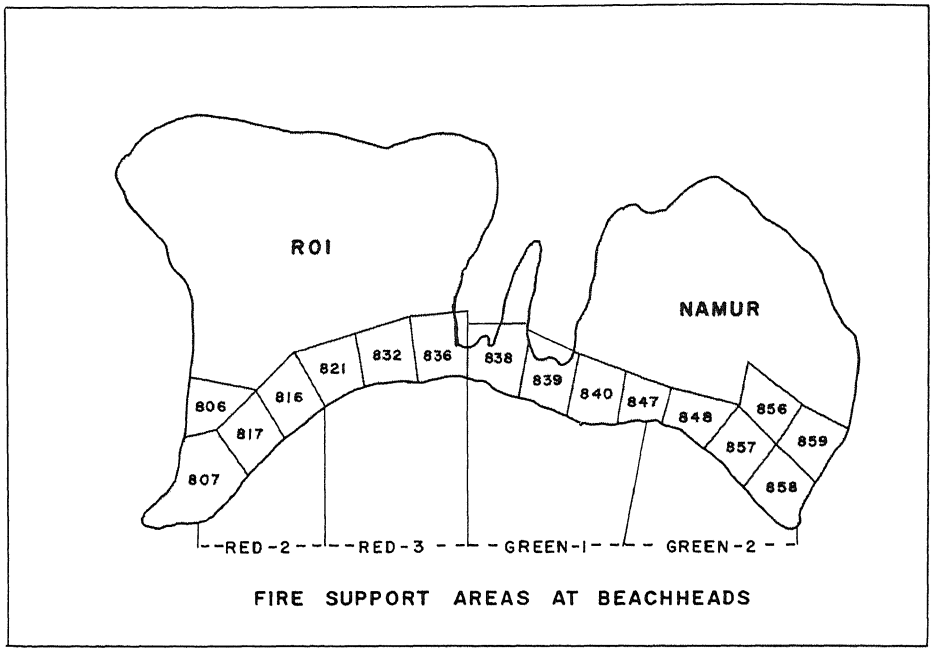
Four battalion landing teams, two on Roi and two on Namur, were to be landed simultaneously. One battalion landing team of each regiment was to be held in reserve.

THE MAIN ASSAULT—ROI-NAMUR

THE PREPARATION

Roi Island received a slow and intermittent bombardment by the new battleship *North Carolina* from late afternoon (1832) on 29 January 1944 until dawn on 30 January. The range varied from 11,000 to 16,500 yards. This ship then joined two more new battleships and their accompanying screen, after which both Roi and Namur were taken under slow, deliberate, air-controlled fire. Ranges varied from 7,000 yards to 12,000 yards. Nine hundred ninety-two rounds of 16-inch high capacity and 54 rounds of 16-inch armor-piercing were used to destroy pinpointed targets. Some 7,843 rounds of 5-inch ammunition were also expended in area-by-area destruction. Since there were no Japanese aircraft around during this bombardment and

[16] CGFOURTHMARDIV, FLINTLOCK Report, Encl (C), para 7.
[17] CTF 53 FLINTLOCK Report, 23 Feb. 1944, p. 14.



Roi-Namur Fire Support Areas.

no firing was observed from Japanese coast defenses, this was target shooting at its best. The Japanese made one futile attempt to wheel into place and use a medium caliber field piece.

It should be noted, however, that the big ship gun bombardment was conducted without the benefit of these ships having on board the operation orders of Commander Northern Attack Force, which through some hocus-pocus had not been received by these important units of the Fire Support Group. On the plus side, the last minute photographs received by message drop from the carriers of TF 58 on the day before the bombardment were reported as most helpful.[18]

Roi-Namur had been subjected to a day-long bombing attack on 29 January 1944 by the planes of Task Force 58. Air strikes were again carried out by the Carrier Force commencing at dawn on 30 January. However, heavy explosions and large fires on Namur from the pinpointed gun bombardment during the next two days, indicated that large storages of fuel and ammunition had not been previously destroyed by either guns or bombs.

One observer of the gun bombardment recorded this summary:

[18] CTU 58.2.2 Action Report, 9 Feb. 1944, Encl. (C).

> In the execution of the plan, Fire Support Unit Two moved to within 1900 yards of the Shore Line of Roi Island and was highly effective in destroying strong points on this island. Fire Support Unit One, on the eastern side of Namur Island, closed the range only to about 3500 yards and was somewhat less effective in accomplishing the destruction of concrete structures on Namur Island, most of which were breached, however, and put out of action.[19]

Approximately 25,000 shells of all sizes were fired by the Shore Bombardment Units of the Northern Attack Force, during all phases of the assault operation.

THE REVISED LANDING PLAN

> It had originally been planned to launch LVTs from LSTs outside the lagoon on D-plus one day and have the LVTs proceed under their own power to the Line of Departure inside the lagoon about five thousand yards from Roi and Namur Islands. Because of the difficulty the LVTs had experienced on the previous day in reaching the Line of Departure from outside the lagoon, the plan was changed and all LSTs were sent inside the lagoon near the Line of Departure for launching their LVTs. . . .[20]

This was an essential decision, as may be seen from the report of the LST Flotilla Commander.

> It was anticipated that 110 LVT2s would return to the LSTs of this unit to transport the assault troops loaded. Only 63 actually returned. . . .

Commenting on the fact that some amtracs needed repairs, he continued:

> LSTs without welding machines were unable to repair several LVTs. . . . Many assault troops lacked transportation because of the shortage of LVT2s. To meet this situation, every LCVP in the vicinity was commandeered and loaded with assault troops and dispatched to the Line of Departure. . . . At about 0800 empty LVT2s singly and in groups of 3 to 10 without [adequate] gas, started coming back from the Islands where they had spent the night. Many of these tractors, according to plan, should have returned to the LST's the night before. . . .[21]

AMTRAC PROBLEMS—DELAYS PLUS DELAYS

William Hour, the hour for the assault landings on Roi and Namur on Dog Day plus one, was planned for a conservative 1000 to allow for

[19] CTF 53, FLINTLOCK Report, 23 Feb. 1944, Encl. (B), Subsection 2.
[20] CTF 53 FLINTLOCK Report, 23 Feb. 1944, para 19.
[21] COMLSTFLOT 13 War Diary, 1 Feb. 1944.

adequate pinpointed gun and air bombardment on the assault beaches (Red 2 and Red 3 on Roi Island, and Green 1 and Green 2 on Namur). At 0822 Commander Northern Attack Force confirmed this hour, but again the Navy did not even come close to putting the Marines ashore at the chosen time. At 0853, as it became evident that amtracs for the assault waves were in short supply, CTF 53 delayed William Hour until 1100, but it was not until 1112 that the *Phelps* shoved off the initial wave of amtracs for Roi and Namur. This short supply occurred despite the 340 amtracs available on Dog Day to the Marines, twice the number available in the Southern Attack Force.

The Marine amtrac battalion which had landed the Marines on the outlying islands on Dog Day was scheduled to land the 24th Marines on Namur. These amtracs were in the water, but a considerable number of the amtrac drivers had for one reason or another not returned at the end of Dog Day operations to their assigned LST for refueling and preparation for the next day. Many of the reasons were quite valid, as the following quotation indicates:

> In re-embarking on LSTs, six of my tractors were led out to sea by the guide boat. Three of them got aboard LST-271, three ran out of gas, and sank.
>
> * * * * *
>
> One of my tractors was held there [at ALBERT] and not released until the night of D plus one day.
>
> * * * * *
>
> One tractor was damaged while disembarking and was unable to participate in said landing. It was later sunk when the LST attempted to tow it.
>
> * * * * *
>
> I lost one LVT due to a faulty bilge pump. This tractor went down just 100 yards off the LST. . . .
>
> * * * * *
>
> When I got back to LST-43, it had just got underway. I told the Captain that several of the LVTs had holes in them and were taking on water. He told me to follow the LST into the lagoon. Two of these LVTs went down on the way back into the lagoon.[22]

The other Marine amtrac battalion was still aboard the LSTs at the commencement of the Dog plus one operating day. These LSTs were late entering the lagoon to launch, since the skippers and navigators had not given

[22] CO Report of 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 12 Apr. 1944, Encl. (B), p. 2, Encl. (A), p. 1, and Encl. (C), pp. 1–2.

an adequate seaman's bow during the night to the strong westerly set of the current in the vicinity of Kwajalein Atoll.

These LSTs had contrived a simple but time-consuming arrangement to get their amtracs from the main deck to the tank deck in order to overcome a design stupidity in the amtracs which were longer than the elevator opening on the ship. By running these amtracs up an improvised steep wooden incline on the elevator, their horizontal length was shortened, and the overloaded elevator could be lowered to the tank deck. This canting operation required exact positioning of the amtrac, and was not always accomplished at the first or second try.

Despite the late morning return of the LSTs and their cautious choice of an anchorage well to the rear of the Line of Departure, the 23rd Marines reached that line at 1045. The 24th Marines were not so lucky, and a fair share of them had to be embarked in LCVPs instead of amtracs. It was another half hour before the 24th Marines could actually start for Namur, three minutes behind the eager beavers of the 23rd Marines headed for Roi.

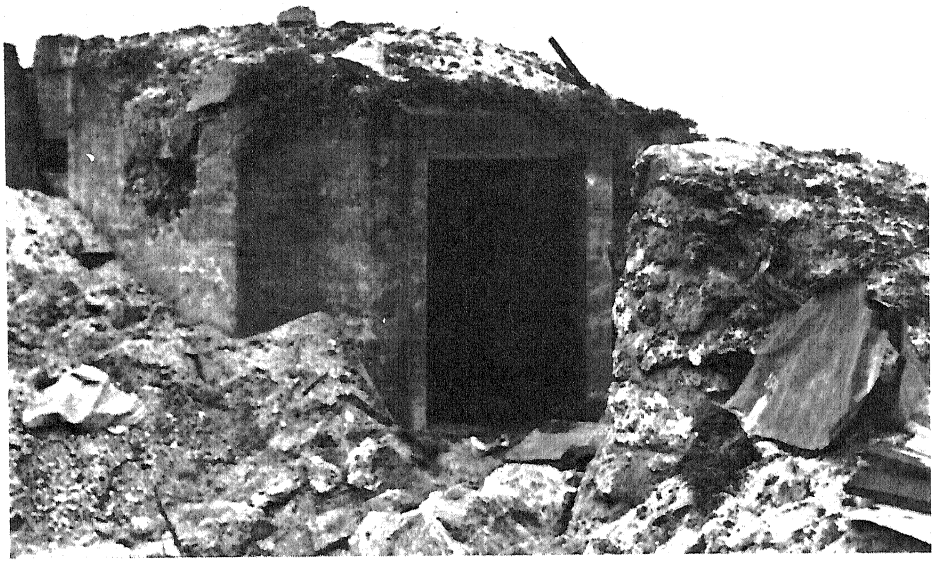
ASSAULT ON ROI

In fact, although touch down on Roi at 1157 was nearly two hours later than originally planned, the movement to the Red beaches had moved along reasonably well after the tardy LSTs under Captain J. S. Lillard had put their amtracs in the water. The supporting LCI gunboats, and the tank-type amtracs did their assigned chores very well, as did the support aircraft, the offshore gun support ships and the Marines' artillery.

The last-minute air support for the landing on Roi and Namur was a carefully coordinated bombing attack occurring simultaneously with ship gunfire, rocket fire, and artillery fire from the adjacent islands. This tremendous step forward in air support provided plunging fire as an additional element of the immediate pre-landing holocaust. The gunfire was promptly lifted when the landing waves were 500 yards from the beach, at which moment the air observer dropped a parachute flare. In fact, the naval and air bombardment on the assault beaches of Roi Island had been so devastating that the Commander 23rd Marines after landing soon radioed:

> This is a Pip. No opposition near the beach. . . .[23]

[23] TBS Log quoted in Heinl and Crown, *The Marshalls* (Marine Corps Monograph), p. 71.



80-G-230809

Destroyed blockhouse on Red Beach Three, Roi Island.

CTF 53 reported:

> The first four waves of assault troops landed and advanced standing up.[24]

While this condition did not hold true for all of Roi Island, nevertheless Marine tanks reached the northeast corner of Roi about 1338 and by 1800 the island was in Marine possession. The Fifth Amphibious Corps logged Roi secured at 0800, 2 February.

At 1930 on 10 February the first successful landing on the repaired and refurbished Roi airstrip was made by a Navy PB-4Y.

ASSAULT ON NAMUR

The 24th Marines were not really ready to leave the Line of Departure when the signal was executed by the control ship *Phelps* for the first assault wave to shove off for the beach. The 23rd Marines, on the left of the 24th Marines, had been champing at the bit for a half hour. This undoubtedly influenced the decision to get the assault boat waves underway, despite the

[24] CTF 53 Roi Namur Action Report, Encl. (C), p. 5.

fact that the Commanding Officer 24th Marines had requested a further delay of William Hour to 1200, or, better yet, to leave the Line of Departure at 1200 for the 33-minute run to the beach. This delay was not granted but it was nearly 1200 when the landings on Green Beach One and Two actually took place.

The lack of opposition on the Green beaches of Namur was similar to the enemy's lack of resistance at the Red beaches of Roi, but the Namur assault did not carry forward with similar momentum. The primary reason in the early moments of the assault landing was that the armored amtracs continued to fire just over the heads of the assault troops, making it dangerous to advance rapidly. Lesser reasons included an anti-tank ditch which delayed the forward movement of the amtracs and a really horrendous explosion about 1305 of a torpedo store house chock full of torpedo warheads in the path of the advancing troops on the right flank. Many casualties to our advancing troops resulted from this explosion. Two lesser explosions in the same area followed.

The Japanese opposition inland on Namur was given time by these occurrences to recover their senses, if not to regroup and reorganize. They took advantage of a generous supply of natural obstacles and made the Marine task a difficult and time-consuming one, despite the fact that all senior Japanese officers had been killed either on Dog Day or early on Dog Day plus one by the ferocious air bombing and gun bombardment.



80-G-230825

Marines waiting to advance on Green Beach Two, 2 February 1944.

However, the Commanding General, Fourth Marines came ashore shortly after 1700 and assumed command ashore at 0925 on Dog Day plus two (2 February 1944). By 1418 on that day Namur was secured and so reported by Major General Schmidt.

The problems for the Marines of the Northern Attack Force were about over at this juncture, but as Colonel D. Z. Zimmerman, Air Corps, AUS, the War Plans Officer of the Fifth Amphibious Force, observed, the logistic support work of the transports and landing craft had just reached the problem stage. He continued:

> Ships of Transport Division 26 remained in the Transport Area all night with instructions to continue unloading throughout the night. Effective unloading was not accomplished. Complete ship and shore blackout, weak moonlight then no moon, reefs, unknown waters, rough water, drift, lack of boats, and receding or low tide during most of the night combined to make minimum compliance with instructions the operating rule.[25]

THE COST

A Japanese communique issued soon after Kwajalein was captured stated that the Japanese Army and Navy garrisons there totaled 4,500 and that there were 2,000 civilians. It added that they all died defending the atoll. This latter part was not quite correct, since 130 Japanese and 167 Koreans were made prisoners.

Commander Southern Attack Force reported that he had lost 157 dead, 17 missing, and 712 wounded. Comparative figures reported for the Northern Attack Force were 129 dead, 65 missing, and 436 wounded. While final reports shifted most of the "missing" to "dead," personnel losses were much less than during the Gilbert Islands Operations, to the surprise of nearly everyone. At least part of the answer lay in the pre-landing period of heavy air and gun bombardment.[26]

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

An examination of the ships, units and their commanders making up the

[25] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, Observer Comments on FLINTLOCK, Colonel D. Z. Zimmerman, Air Corps, AUS. War Plans Officer, 12 Apr. 1944.

[26] (a) COMINCH Operational Analysis of FLINTLOCK, 12 Feb. 1944, COMINCH Chart Room, FLINTLOCK Subject File; (b) CGFIFTHPHIBCORPS FLINTLOCK Report, Vol. III, Encl. (D), G-2 Report and Vol. IV, Encl. (E), G-1 Report; (c) CGFOURTHMARDIV FLINTLOCK Report, Encl. (I); (d) CGSEVENTHDIV FLINTLOCK Report, Vol. III, G-1 Report.

Northern and the Southern Attack Forces indicates that, amphibiously, both the more battle-experienced transports and troops were assigned to the Southern Attack Force. The Northern Attack Force had a troop unit—the Fourth Marine Division—which had not been battle tested. The transports, the LSTs, and the smaller amphibious units of the Northern Attack Force were largely doing their first amphibious combat operation, although there were some experienced amphibians, among them Captain Pat Buchanan, Commander Transports, and Commanders J. B. McVey and L. F. Brown (USNR), Commanding Officers *Alcyone* and *William P. Biddle* respectively. However, the Northern Attack Force was blessed with a fully experienced Commander.

Some of the amtrac and LCVP boat wave problems which arose in the Northern Attack Force are traceable directly to the inexperience of boat wave commanders and of amtrac drivers. It is ever thus in war that inexperience must pay its penalties. The crux of the overall situation was limited time. It would have been desirable to move the Fourth Marine Division from Californian waters to Hawaii and then to transfer it to the experienced amphibious ships just back from the Gilbert Islands operation. But this step plus the time for a rehearsal in Hawaii would have required delaying FLINTLOCK no less than two weeks. A single extra week did not exist in the JCS operational time schedules, nor in Admiral King's thinking. So, an inexperienced amphibious group had the difficult chore of establishing ashore an inexperienced Marine division. There were problems, but there also was great success.

It was Commander Transport Group, Southern Attack Force, who summarized the situation in his FLINTLOCK Report:

> It seems we must inevitably go into each new operation with an extraordinary high degree of general inexperience.[27]

SOLUTIONS TO AMTRAC CONTROL PROBLEMS

As a result of the very real difficulties which had arisen with naval control of the amtracs in the assault waves, Commander Northern Attack Force came up with this recommendation:

> It is therefore recommended that LVT2s which are to be used for landing

[27] CTG 52.5 FLINTLOCK Report, 15 Feb. 1944, Part III, para. 1(b).

> assault waves be considered as boats rather than vehicles, that they be manned by Navy personnel who have been trained in seamanship and boat handling as boat units at an Amphibious Training establishment such as the Landing Craft School at San Diego, and that they be assigned to the vessels in which embarked just as LCVPs and LCMs are so assigned. For LVTs to be used primarily for purposes other than that of landing assault troops, the present [Marine] organization should be retained.[28]

The same problems worried the Commanding General, Fourth Marines. His solution was quite different and along two paths. First, he recommended that the Marine Tractor Battalion be made a regular part of the Marine Division and not just attached to it for a particular operation. The second part of his recommendation was a drastic one. Major General Schmidt proposed that the Landing Force Commander take over control of the boat waves from the Line of Departure to the beach. Fortunately, for the peace of mind of the Navy, his Marine superior the Commanding General, Fifth Amphibious Corps, rejected the strong medicine in the second of these recommendations along with the first proposal.[29]

COMMUNICATIONS

It is worth noting here that while, at the amtrac and landing craft level in the Northern Attack Force, communications had been a major Dog Day stumbling block due to grounding out of amtrac and boat radios, Commander Northern Attack Force found no fault with his 71-page communication plan or with its execution. He reported: "Communications were generally excellent."

This was not a unanimously accepted conclusion, as many amphibious ships reported communication problems. Major General Smith commented on higher level communications in this way:

> Communications with the Northern Landing Force were slow and inadequate during Phase I. Consequently the announcement of H-hour was not received by this Headquarters. . . .[30]

LAGOON NAVIGATION HAZARDS

The hazards of lagoon navigation assumed the proportions of a "Worry

[28] CTF 53 FLINTLOCK Report, para 39.
[29] CGFOURTHMARDIV, FLINTLOCK Report and endorsements thereon.
[30] CGFIFTHPHIBCORPS FLINTLOCK Report, Encl. (C), G-2 Report, Encl. (B), Report of Northern Landing Force, para 3(b).

Bug, First Class" during the Gilbert Island operation, when several destroyers scraped coral heads. It really became a military hazard at Kwajalein Atoll, when the following ships and craft of the Northern Attack Force ran badly afoul of unsuspected and uncharted coral heads: *Anderson* (DD-411), *Remly* (DD-688), *Young America* (XAP), *Chief* (AM-315), LCI-450, YMS-320 and LCT-576. The damage to the *Anderson* and to LCI-450 was so severe that they had to be towed back to Pearl Harbor for repairs.

OFF TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Before describing briefly the Eniwetok operation, it should be noted here that the obligation to send a large share of the FLINTLOCK amphibious forces to the South Pacific immediately after the operation, was a real one. Rear Admiral Conolly was directed to give up his flagship, the Amphibious Command Ship *Appalachian,* five days after the Northern Attack Force landings started, as the following extracts from CTF 53 FLINTLOCK Report indicate:

> *4 February. Lindenwald* arrived from Kwajalein to load amphibious tractors for SOPAC [4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion]. . . .
> *5 February.* CTF 53 shifted flag to *Maryland.*
> *6 February.* Battleships, Cruisers and Destroyers of TF 53 . . . (Rear Admiral Oldendorf OTC) departed for Majuro for fuel, provisions and ammunition. *Maryland* transferred all 16″ and 5″ bombardment ammunition to *Colorado* prior latter's departure.
> * * * * *
> Task Unit 53.13.3 Captain Buchanan in *Dupage* with . . . screened by . . . departed for Funafuti.[31]

ENIWETOK ATOLL

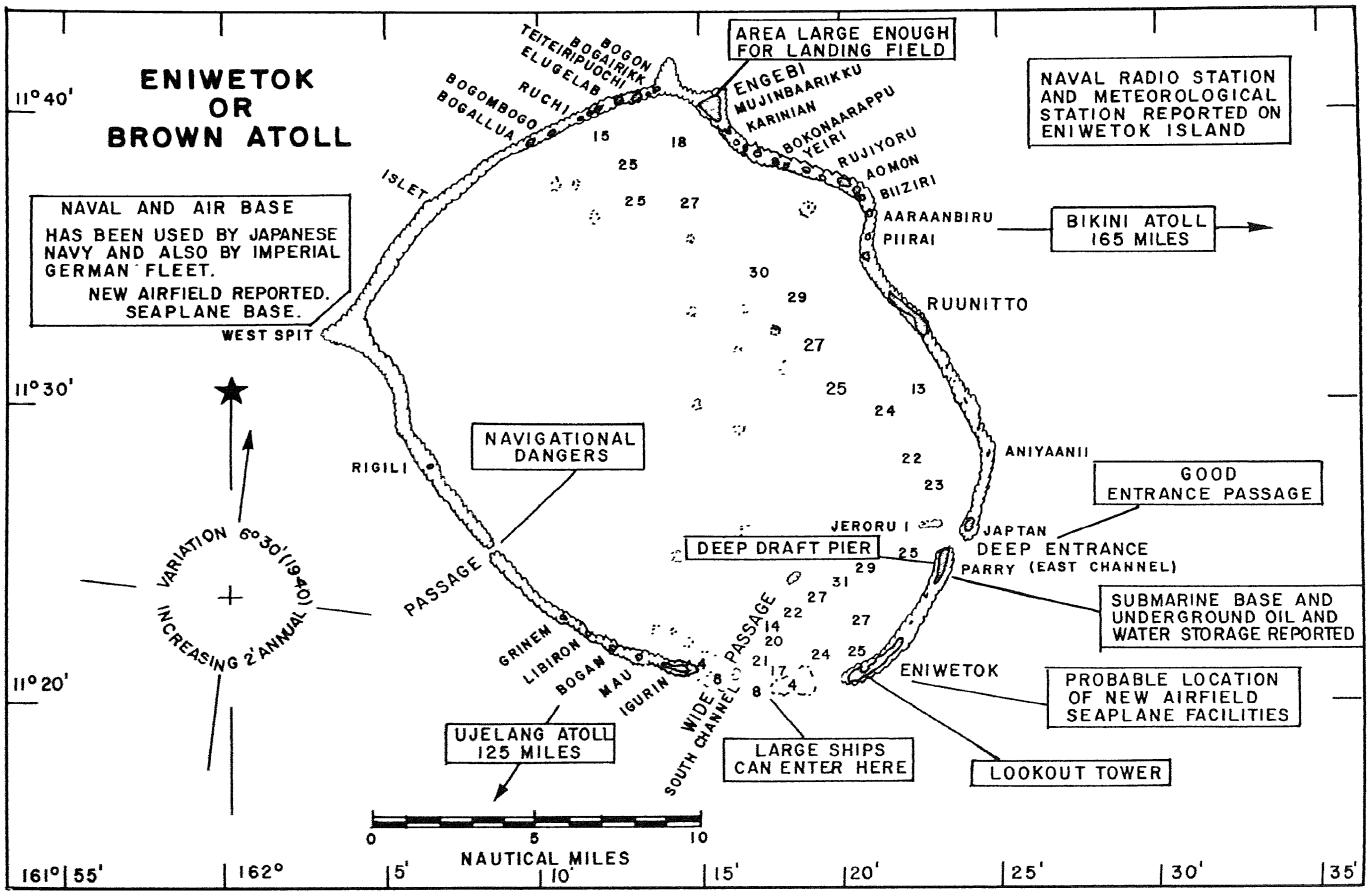
BACKGROUND

Way back on 1 September 1943, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had directed CINCPAC that:

> Upon completion, or during the accomplishment of securing control of the Marshall Islands, seize or control Wake, Eniwetok, and Kusaie.[32]

[31] CTF 53 FLINTLOCK Report, Encl (A), pp. 18–19.

[32] COMINCH to CINCPAC, 012115 Sep. 1943. See also CINCPAC to COMINCH 260519 Oct. 1943.



Eniwetok Atoll.

On 26 October 1943, CINCPAC had informed COMINCH that operations for control of Eniwetok Atoll would be undertaken simultaneously with the operations to seize the other main islands in the Marshalls. But when it came right down to the difficult planning of what resources were available to do the landing, CINCPAC was constrained by the practicalities to set the day for the assault on Eniwetok as 10 May 1944. Just after GALVANIC, this date was advanced by CINCPAC to 19 March 1944. The assault actually took place on 17 February 1944.

The over-all operation against Truk, Kusaie, Wake, and Eniwetok had the catchy code designation of CATCHPOLE, while DOWNSIDE was the code name for Eniwetok Atoll.[33]

The primary objectives in seizing Eniwetok were to provide a naval base for our further advance to the westward and to deny the use of the atoll to the enemy, who were using it primarily to stage aircraft to the central and eastern Marshalls. Once held by our forces, the Japanese would find it cumbersome and time-consuming to ferry land planes into Wake and into the by-passed atolls in the Marshalls, via the longer route through Truk and Kusaie.

The great desirability of owning Eniwetok Atoll as a springboard for an amphibious operation against the Caroline Islands or the Marianas was apparent from their locations on the charts. Eniwetok Atoll was only 670 miles from Truk, the 'Pearl of the Carolines,' and just over 1,000 miles from Guam in the Marianas.

ENIWETOK ATOLL

Eniwetok Atoll was a nearly circular atoll—about 20 miles across—with more than 30 islands supporting underbrush and coconut trees, mostly along the north and southeastern side of the coral rim. The large lagoon of 388 square miles inside the relatively high coral islands was the best large anchorage in the Marshalls and had been used frequently by the Japanese Fleet. It lay about 330 miles northwest from the airfield on Kwajalein Island.

There were three fair sized islands in the atoll rim: Engebi, Parry and Eniwetok. Engebi, a mile long and shaped a bit like the old fore and aft naval full dress hat, was at the north. Parry, two miles long and looking

[33] (a) CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Joint Staff Study-Marshalls, Ser 00272 of 29 Nov. 1943; (b) *Ibid.* (Alternate), Ser 00273 of 30 Nov. 1943.

like an upside down teardrop, marked the southern side of the easterly Deep Entrance into the lagoon. Eniwetok, the largest island, two and a half miles long and shaped like a marlin spike, marked the eastern side of Wide Passage, the southerly entrance to the lagoon.

There was a 4,000-foot Japanese airstrip on Engebi that was completed in July 1943.

On 18 January 1944, just as the amphibians were putting together the lessons learned from their rehearsal for FLINTLOCK, CINCPAC issued his second Joint Staff Study for CATCHPOLE. Two of its basic assumptions were that FLINTLOCK had been successfully completed, and that Kwajalein Atoll and Majuro Atoll were capable of supporting heavy bombers.[34]

It was readily apparent that the longer the Eniwetok Atoll operation was delayed after the eastern Marshalls had been assaulted, the more troop reinforcements coming in from the Japanese homeland would be on the beaches of the islands of the Eniwetok Atoll to greet our Marines and soldiers. Only 800 Japanese troops were estimated in mid-January 1944 to be at Eniwetok.

The planning factor for troops required for an amphibious operation called for a superiority of the attacking forces of 4 or 5 to 1. If the Japanese had 1,000 defensive troops on Eniwetok Atoll, we needed 5,000 assault troops. If they had 5,000 defensive troops, we needed 25,000 assault troops, a major amphibious operation. Hence, speed was of the essence.

The big problem was whether the necessary air and big gun resources could be assembled and used successfully in the sparse days available before they had to be sent out of the area to the South Pacific.

Operations for carrier strikes against Truk (24 March) and against more remote Kavieng on New Ireland Island (1 April) in the Southwest Pacific were on the JCS check-off list following FLINTLOCK. They had the priority call on available heavy-gun combatant ships as well as carriers. The JCS directive requiring the sending of the new battleships to the Southwest Pacific for the Kavieng operation was particularly troublesome. Japanese air strength on Ponape in the Carolines, only 370 miles southwest of Eniwetok, and on Kusaie about 420 miles due south of Eniwetok Atoll, would need a lot of post-FLINTLOCK attention to reduce the air attack worry factor at Eniwetok. Ships and planes required for and in support of the CATCHPOLE Operation could not double in brass at the same time in the faraway Southwest Pacific.

[34] *Ibid.*, Ser 0009 of 18 Jan. 1944.

CATCHPOLE GETS OFF THE GROUND

After the first three days of the Kwajalein operation it was apparent that it could be completed successfully without having to use the nearly 10,000 Marines and troops in the Corps Reserve. These came primarily from the Marine 22nd Regiment and the Army 106th Infantry Regiment (less 2nd Battalion). Admiral King, noting that the Corps Reserve would not be required and ever determined to get on with the war, questioned CINCPOA as to whether it was a practicability to conduct CATCHPOLE immediately.[35]

CINCPAC replied that he was one step ahead of COMINCH and was already communicating with his subordinates in regard to doing just that. In fact seven hours before Admiral King's despatch got on the air, Rear Admiral Turner had originated a despatch to Vice-Admiral Spruance stating that he and his fighting Marine subordinate, Major General Holland M. Smith, were agreed that the Eniwetok operation should be undertaken at once and suggested a Dog Day of 10 February.[36]

Rear Admiral Turner must have warmed the cockles of his seniors' hearts when they read in his despatch that he was proceeding with urgent plans for the accomplishment of CATCHPOLE in advance of approval by his seniors to undertake this operation. Time was of the essence and the various time groups in the despatches being exchanged at the higher levels during this operational period indicated that it was taking four or more hours for an operational priority despatch to reach Pearl Harbor and Washington from the Marshalls.

Admiral Spruance remembers that:

> The day before I sailed from Pearl Harbor for the Marshall Operation, Admiral Nimitz had received the first aerial photograph of Eniwetok. When we had examined them, I said that I wished we could proceed with the capture of Eniwetok as soon as we had taken Kwajalein. This was not possible if the Fleet had to go to the South Pacific.
>
> The morning after both ends of Kwajalein had been taken, I received a radio message from Admiral Nimitz asking what I thought about proceeding with the capture of Eniwetok. After consulting with Kelly Turner and Holland Smith, both of whom were ready to go, I sent a message off to CINCPAC, and he ordered the capture of Eniwetok. That done, we held the Marshalls securely.[37]

[35] (a) COMINCH to CINCPOA 021926 Feb. 1944; (b) COMCENPAC to CTF 58, 031311 Feb. 1944; (c) CTF 51 to CTF 50 021204 Feb. 1944.

[36] CTF 51 to CTF 50, 021204 Feb. 1944.

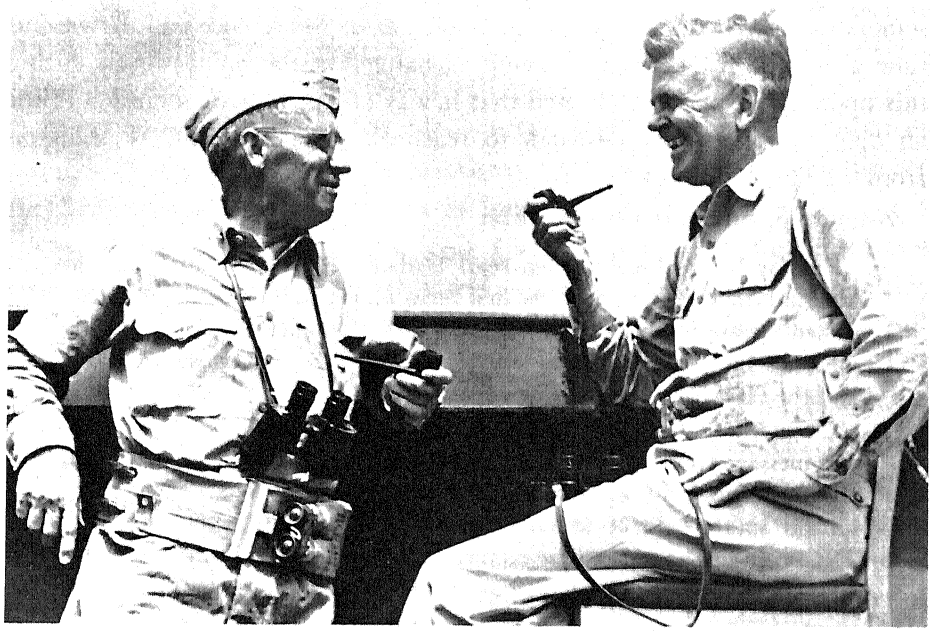
[37] Spruance to Director of Naval History, letter, 26 Apr. 1966.

The initial target date was set for 12 February 1944. This could not be met by the Carrier Force. Vice Admiral Spruance then set 15 February 1944, as Dog Day for CATCHPOLE. As late as 11 February, Admiral Nimitz was pressing him to anticipate that date, if practicable. The Dog Day for CATCHPOLE was not finally established as 17 February until 15 February, when it was known definitely that the Fast Carrier Task Force, TF 58, could and would hit Truk on 17–18 February. At the same time, CINCPAC decided that with Eniwetok Atoll in hand it would be practicable to undertake a further major operation in mid-June 1944, and so informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[38]

THE ENIWETOK OPERATION

The forces assigned to seize Eniwetok were organized at Kwajalein. The basic amphibious unit to which others were joined was Task Unit 51.1, the

[38] CINCPAC to COMINCH, 110106 Feb. 1944; CINCPOA 120441 Feb. 1944; CINCPAC 150749 Feb. 1944; CINCPOA to COMINCH, 142253 Feb. 1944.



Turner Collection

Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill and Brigadier General Thomas E. Watson on board USS Cambria, *February 1944.*

FLINTLOCK Expeditionary Reserve Force under Captain D. W. Loomis. This consisted of two transport divisions; one carrying the 22nd Marine Regiment, the other, under Captain C. A. Misson, carrying the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 106th Infantry Regiment. There were 106 amtracs and 17 amphibian tanks aboard. Both Marine and Army units were reinforced, and according to Rear Admiral Turner's FLINTLOCK Report, numbered 5,760 Marines and 4,509 Army troops when they sailed off for Eniwetok Atoll. The attack transports were largely veterans of the Guadalcanal and the Gilbert Island operations.[39]

Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill commanded the Eniwetok Expeditionary Group, charged with the capture and occupation of Eniwetok Atoll. Brigadier General T. E. Watson, USMC, was in command of the Expeditionary Troops and the Eniwetok Landing Force. Rear Admiral Hill proceeded from Majuro Atoll to Kwajalein Atoll via plane on 3 February and commenced drafting his plans.

Admiral Hill recalled:

> Some historians say that the Eniwetok move was initiated by Holland Smith and that his people had prepared a plan. If so, 'tis strange I was never informed. I had to start from scratch.[40]

The amphibious part of the Eniwetok Expeditionary Group consisted of five attack transports, one transport, two attack cargo ships, one cargo ship, two high speed destroyer-type transports, one dock landing ship and nine LSTs. Ten destroyers were told off as the transport screen and three minesweepers to sweep up any Japanese mines. Gunfire support was provided by three old battleships, three heavy cruisers, and seven destroyers. The latter also acted as anti-submarine screen for the larger fire support ships. To provide close air support, there were three jeep carriers screened by three destroyers. One group of the Carrier Forces containing one large carrier, two cruiser-hulled carriers with two heavy cruisers and one anti-aircraft cruiser with eight destroyers to provide generous anti-aircraft and anti-submarine protection completed the Expeditionary Group.

The operational planning period of the next six days was hectic but on 9 February, Rear Admiral Hill issued his Attack Order A106–44, and with very minor corrections, the 182-page order stood up.

[39] (a) COMFIFTHFLT (COMCENPACFOR) Op Plan 4–44, 9 Feb. 1944; (b) CTF 51 Op Plan A9–44, 7 Feb. 1944; (c) CTG 51.11 Attack Order A106–44, 9 Feb. 1944, including Annex H; (d) CTG 51.11 Report of Eniwetok Operation, 7 Mar. 1944.

[40] Interview with Admiral Harry W. Hill, 29 Nov. 1966. Hereafter Hill.

Admiral Nimitz had flown out to Kwajalein on 4–5 February and during the next two days gave his approval to the general aspects of the plan which had been developed by the senior officers concerned for assaulting Eniwetok Atoll.[41]

It is noted here that CATCHPOLE was the only major amphibious operation of the Central Pacific campaign where the operational planning period was less than a week. Further, as a result of our seizure of the heart of the Marshalls (Kwajalein), the Japanese Combined Fleet left Truk on 3 February 1944 and retreated to Palau Islands more than a thousand miles to the westward of Truk. This was a major victory for the Pacific Fleet, not immediately known to us. Therefore it was not a basis for the operational planning of CATCHPOLE and not shouted about in the public press.

JAPANESE DEFENSES AT ENIWETOK

> Eniwetok is not strongly defended.
>
> It is estimated that there are approximately 800 enemy personnel on the atoll.[42]

These educated guesses by Commander Central Pacific Force and the Commanding General Expeditionary Troops were the basis on which CATCHPOLE operational planning was started in early February. However, interrogation of prisoners captured at Kwajalein Atoll indicated the

> possibility that some portion of the 1st Mobile Shipborne Force of 2,000 to 3,000 Army troops may be in the area.

This was the sad reality. Way back in JICPOA at Pearl, an estimate of 2,900 to 4,000 Japanese troops on Eniwetok Atoll was issued on February 10th, the day after CTG 51.11 had issued his plan. Photographic intelligence was interpreted to indicate that the major portions of these troops were on Engebi Island, and that Parry and Eniwetok were lightly held. The actuality was that there were nearly 3,000 troops, 500 other military personnel, and several hundred Koreans on the Atoll, and that each of these three islands had a fair share of the total Japanese strength.

The facts disclosed by documents captured later was that the Japanese 1st Amphibious Brigade under Major General Yoshima Nishida, IJA, arrived at Eniwetok on 4 January 1944. Part of the Brigade was soon transferred

[41] CINCPAC Command Summary, Book Five, 4–8 Feb. 1944, pp. 1849–1852.

[42] (a) COMFIFTHFLT Op Plan 4–44, p. 5; (b) VAC Operation Order 2–44 of Tactical Group One, 10 Feb. 1944.

to Kwajalein and eastern Marshall atolls. There were 2,586 troops of the Brigade remaining at Eniwetok Atoll. Some 20 to 120 of 150 grounded pilots and airmen who had been flown out of the eastern Marshalls had the bad luck to still be on Eniwetok Atoll when our amphibious forces arrived.

The senior Japanese officers in Eniwetok Atoll all had gotten the word about how United States forces conducted amphibious operations. In their defensive order, captured when we took the atoll, they correctly estimated that the landings would be made from the lagoon side and that smaller islands would be seized before Engebi, the most important, was assaulted. In the short time available to them the Japanese 1st Amphibious Brigade built trenches and dugouts protected by coconut log barricades, roofed over foxholes, and poured concrete pill boxes. Parry had the most troops, about 1,300. Engebi with its air base had the strongest constructed defenses. All troops were encouraged by Major General Nishida to "die gloriously." Even the sick and wounded were ordered to "commit suicide." [43]

Major General Nishida probably did the best he could with what he had during the six weeks he was on Eniwetok, but the defensive installations on Eniwetok Atoll had major deficiencies when compared with Kwajalein Atoll, even though they were better camouflaged. There were practically no strong concrete defensive structures, the defense being centered around foxholes and trenches. Luckily for us, also, there were no beach mines nor underwater obstacles in the lagoon beach approaches. The beach mines had arrived at Eniwetok Atoll but were in a dump. There were only random anti-tank land mines inland. Two 4.7-inch ex-British coastal defense guns had long been mounted in earth works at the northern extremity of Engebi Island. These were the only coast defense guns in the atoll.

Our success in the Eniwetok operation was to be facilitated by bombing and strafing attacks by carrier aircraft at frequent intervals during the ten days prior to 17 February—Dog Day for CATCHPOLE. And a large scale strike by the Task Force 58 (nine carriers) against the Japanese "Rock of Gibraltar," Truk Atoll in the Carolines, on 17 February was planned. Hopefully it would send the Japanese Combined Fleet scurrying westward and drastically reduce the Japanese aircraft available for interference with our forces assaulting Eniwetok Atoll. Unfortunately, the first of these objectives had been undertaken by the Japanese two weeks before.

[43] (a) JICPOA Bulletin No. 89–44, Colonel Toshio Yano, Commander Engebi Garrison Order of 10 Feb. 1944; (b) CTG 51.11, 242328 Feb. 1944; (c) JICPOA Translation of Japanese Documents No. 7603 and No. 7811; (d) JICPOA Interrogation Report No. 47.

THE SCHEME OF MANEUVER—ENIWETOK ATOLL

The planned Scheme of Maneuver at Eniwetok Atoll followed the familiar pattern of naval air and gun bombardment, minesweeping, seizure of lightly defended islands of the atoll on Dog Day (17 February) and emplacement of artillery thereon; then a main assault landing on the more strongly held islands on later days, supported by artillery and by air strikes and ship gun bombardment. Admiral Hill recalled that a request by the Commanding Officer of the 106th Infantry Regiment to land artillery on Igurin Island seven miles west of Eniwetok Island was turned down because it would require an extra day in the assault plan.[44]

As has been mentioned before, the three main Japanese occupied islands of Eniwetok Atoll were Engebi at the northern extremity and Parry and Eniwetok at the southeast. Deep Entrance was just north of Parry Island and Wide Passage just to the westward of Eniwetok Island. A single runway airfield was located on Engebi Island.

In carrying out this general Scheme of Maneuver, one small island to the west of Engebi and five small islands to the south of Engebi were to be seized on Dog Day. Artillery was to be emplaced on two of the islands to the south of Engebi.

On Dog Day plus one, Engebi was to be assaulted by two battalions of the Marine 22nd Regiment.

On Dog Day plus XRAY, Eniwetok was to be assaulted, and if only one battalion was judged necessary for the assault, Parry Island would be assaulted the same day. If two battalions were required, then Parry would be assaulted later. XRAY would be two, three, or more days depending on when the capture of Engebi had been attained. Eniwetok was to be assaulted by the 106th Infantry Regiment, and Parry by the troops most available, possibly one battalion of the 106th and one battalion of Marines.

In drafting this detailed plan, it was necessary to keep in mind that the Reserve Force Landing Group, while it had carried out landing exercises, had neither trained nor rehearsed for an assault landing—much less for one on Eniwetok Atoll.

GATHERING THE DOWNSIDE FORCES

While the DOWNSIDE (Eniwetok) forces were being sorted out from

[44] (a) CTF 51 130716 Feb. 1944; (b) Hill.

the Northern and Southern Attack Forces, organized, and moved to the scene of battle, Eniwetok was worked over by the Carrier Air Force. By the time the Marines and troops dropped in on the atoll, 1,563 air sorties had been conducted against Eniwetok Atoll and 508 tons of bombs dropped.[45]

After a final conference of all Flag and Commanding Officers on 14 February, in lieu of a rehearsal, Rear Admiral Hill's Task Group sortied from Kwajalein on 15 February 1944. The tail-enders of his ships had arrived there only on 13 February.

LSTs LEARN THE HORRORS OF WAR

Before shoving off for Eniwetok, the LST landing craft designated for the CATCHPOLE Operation had a close up look at a retaliatory Japanese bombing raid carried out against Kwajalein Atoll from Eniwetok Atoll, the night of 11–12 February 1944. The LSTs were beached at Roi-Namur at the time. Oil drums and ammunition were partly on the beach and partly aboard the craft. Their reports contained these descriptive passages:

> LSTs 268, 43, and 45 were beached at Roi Island unloading cargo from transports. LST-45 had a load of 2,000 pound bombs and depth charges. Alongside the LSTs were LCTs 346 and 347 also unloading small arms ammunition.
>
> . . . The repeated explosions of ammunition on the beach and the presence of large fires, plus the fact that the adjacent LCTs were fired and their ammunition was exploding caused the ordering of the LSTs to retract from the beach despite unfavorable tide and many surrounding coral heads. All three LSTs succeeded in retracting but grounded on coral within 75 to 200 yards from the beach. . . .[46]
>
> * * * * *
>
> . . . The supply compound was nearly destroyed, one of the ammunition dumps was blown up. . . . Eighty-five percent of all Island supplies ashore were destroyed.[47]
>
> * * * * *
>
> The first bombs were incendiary, immediately starting many oil and ammunition fires. Pieces of incendiary and phosphorous shells fell on and alongside the three LSTs momentarily starting small fires on deck. . . .
>
> Continuously from the moment the first bombs landed, the LSTs were subjected to being sprayed with shrapnel, pieces of hand grenades, fragments

[45] COMINCH Operational Analysis, FLINTLOCK Operation, 12 Feb. 1944.
[46] COMLSTFLOT 13 War Diary, 12 Feb. 1944.
[47] Commander Roi-Namur Action Report, 12 Feb. 1944.

of ammunition cases and projectiles and miscellaneous items resulting from burning and exploding ammunition, explosives, and drums of gasoline and oil on the beach.[48]

THE WEATHER—AND CHARTS

During CATCHPOLE the trade wind continued to blow 17 to 23 knots (according to CTG 51.11 despatch reports) and there were occasional heavy showers, but, except for a drizzle on Dog Day plus one, by and large there was good weather. As a further assist, a Japanese chart of Eniwetok lagoon showing dragged areas free of coral pinnacles was available among the loot captured at Kwajalein Atoll on Dog Day.

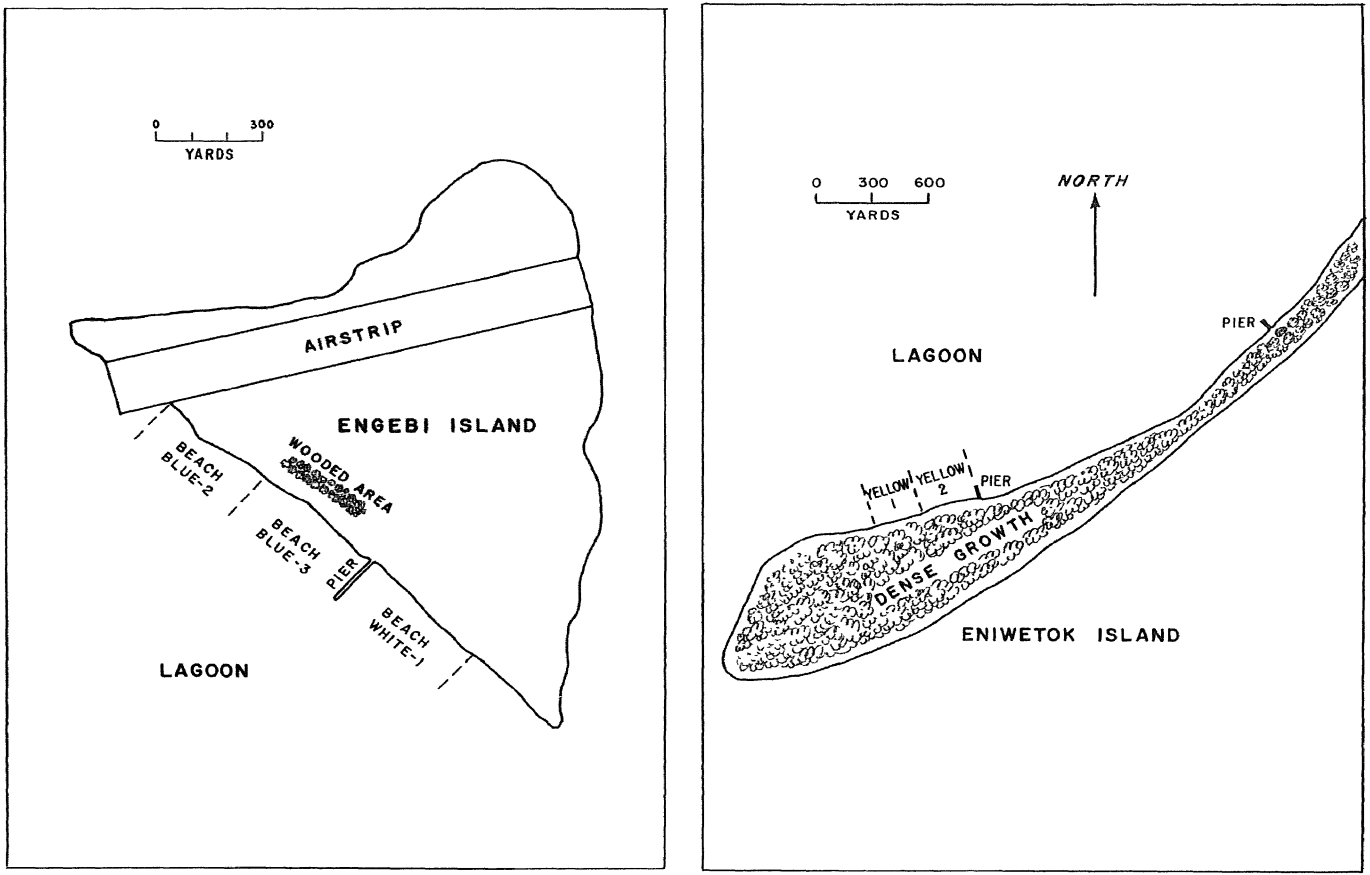
DOG DAY-DOWNSIDE—17 FEBRUARY 1944

The gun bombardment at Eniwetok Atoll began on schedule at 0700 on Dog Day and proceeded uninterrupted by any return fire from the outgunned Japanese. A mine swept up about 0822 by the *Sage* (AM-111), inside the lagoon north of Wide Passage, delayed the initial lagoon movement (by the transports) towards Engebi Island. Altogether 27 moored mines were swept in Eniwetok lagoon. Despite this, by 1034 all amphibious ships and craft were inside the lagoon.

All did not go too well, however, during the lagoon approach to northerly Rujiyoru and Aitsu Islands where reconnaissance troops were to be landed to clear the way for the Marine artillery which was to be landed and sited. The task unit guide, SC-1066, failed to identify Rujiyoru Island correctly and led the anxious ships to the wrong position. It took a bit of doing before the reconnaissance parties landed on the correct two islets. The artillery moved a bit slowly in getting ashore, but by 1530 the artillery had been landed unopposed and before sunset was firing on Engebi Island from Rujiyoru and CAMELLIA Islands (Aitsu), to the southeast of Engebi Island. The guns fired harassing fire all night.

The Beach Reconnaissance Party, closely supported by battleships, cruisers, and LCI gunboats, took a close look at the beaches of Engebi Island, buoyed shoal spots, marked boat lanes, and saw no mines.

[48] COMLSTGRP 38 Action Report, 21 Feb. 1944, p. 2.



Left: Engebi Island showing landing beaches. Right: Yellow beaches of Eniwetok Island.

DOG DAY PLUS ONE AT ENGEBI ISLAND

Once again, on 18 February 1944, at Engebi Island, Eniwetok Atoll, the Navy landed the Marines on time and in fact, two or three minutes ahead of William Hour which was set for 0845. During the landing operations all went well. Even the trade wind veered a bit to the east and kept the bombardment dust clear of the boat lanes. Commander Air Support Eniwetok reported that there were no calls for air support at Engebi.

A vigorous offensive by the Marines, and the landing of the Reserve Battalion, secured Engebi by 1640 on Dog Day, but mopping up operations continued throughout Dog Day plus one. Valuable Japanese code books were captured.

ENIWETOK ISLAND—19 FEBRUARY 1944

Eniwetok Island had been thought to be lightly held and close air reconnaissance of the island by seaplanes of the Eniwetok Expeditionary Group had not provided evidence of strong Japanese forces or defensive installations to change this belief. Admiral Hill remembered:

> Signs of occupancy on Parry and Eniwetok were nil.[49]

Actually some 780 Japanese troops of the 1st Amphibious Brigade were on Eniwetok Island.

Eniwetok Island's elevation of ten feet and over was one of the highest in the Marshalls. The coconut trees and the jungle undergrowth were dense. Japanese foxholes were extremely deep, interconnected and covered with coconut logs. Additionally, there were concrete pill boxes, immobilized tanks, wire barricades, and determined fighting men.

It was apparent from the information elicited from the Japanese prisoners taken on Engebi Island on Dog Day, as well as from Rujiyoru natives and captured Japanese documents, that the Japanese defenses must be extremely well camouflaged, since all three sources indicated they did exist in generous quantity.

On this basis, the information having been obtained late on Dog Day by a JICPOA unit in the flagship *Cambria,* and reaffirmed by a CINCPAC despatch, both sources also indicating that some 800 Japanese troops were on Eniwetok Island, the plans of the Landing Force for Eniwetok Island were

[49] Hill.

changed during the night before Dog Day plus two. The landing took place on a two battalion front instead of the previously planned one battalion front. A repetition of the request by the Commanding Officer of the 106th Infantry, Colonel Russell G. Ayers, AUS, to land artillery on Igurin Island to support the landing, was again turned down in the belief that the delay required was unnecessary in view of the very adequate gunfire support available from afloat.[50]

The Transport Division Commander after the operation reported:

> The coordinated effort of the reassembly of troops, equipment, and supplies in the FRAGILE [Engebi Island] area, and their transfer to the PRIVILEGE [Eniwetok Island] area, in the short space of time it took to accomplish the complex problem, was one of the outstanding praiseworthy features of the DOWNSIDE operation.[51]

YOKE Hour, the time for the assault landing on Eniwetok Island, was initially set for 0900 on 19 February and then twice retarded. The final YOKE Hour was 0922. Transport Division 30's report explained the circumstances:

> LSTs, LCTs and the Control Group were on station in the prescribed area at dawn. LCMs carrying seven medium tanks, despatched from the Engebi Area during the night arrived late, and the instruction of the personnel regarding positions in the wave formation occupied a time interval which forced a delay of YOKE Hour of fifteen minutes. At 0913 *Neville* Boat Group Commander reported his first wave not ready, and the time of YOKE Hour was advanced [retarded] to 0922.[52]

The lead amtracs actually touched down at 0918. Less than 100 yards inland, their forward progress was stopped by an eight to twenty foot steep ridge which the amtracs could not climb over, and which the troops did not climb over immediately after being disembarked. Later waves of troops and vehicles crowded up on the stalled lead wave and on the beach. Then:

> A series of squalls struck the area at this time. . . .
> Sniper fire on boats was heavy, and many were hit, some repeatedly. Several deaths and a number of serious injuries of boat personnel resulted. Boat crews behaved splendidly under fire.[53]

Slow progress made by the troops through the heavy mangrove bushes, thick vines, and palms, as well as sturdy resistance by the Japanese necessi-

[50] *Ibid.*
[51] COMTRANSDIV 30 Action Report, 6 Mar. 1944, p. 3.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

tated calling on the Reserve, the 22nd Marines, who had taken Engebi the day before. The first wave of Marines from the Reserves left the Line of Departure at 1315.

Eniwetok Island was not secured until Dog Day plus four (February 21st). Because of the nature of the island, naval gunfire and close air support played only a sporadic part in the three days of fighting.

As the Army history remarks:

> However, some of the responsibility for the delay must be laid to the extreme caution that the troops of the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, displayed in their movement eastward.[54]

PARRY ISLAND—GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

The Parry Island assault was originally scheduled for the morning of 20 February. The re-embarking of troops and medium tanks and the exhaustion of the tank personnel led to a postponement to 0900, 22 February.[55]

According to Rear Admiral Harry Hill's report, the attack was postponed to permit rehabilitation and reorganization of personnel and equipment and to allow additional time for air and surface bombardment of Parry. Newly found targets had been made visible by the blasting away of Parry Island foliage during the air and gun bombardments of the previous day.

As late as 13 February, CTG 58.4 (Commander Carrier Task Group Four), in reporting that his planes had bombed Parry Island, added that no defensive installations were noted on Parry. This was corrected the next day when concrete pillboxes and sandtraps were reported.[56]

Because of the difficulties encountered in taking Eniwetok Island and because Japanese documents captured on Engebi indicated there were 1,200 troops and strong defensive installations on Parry Island, a great deal more preliminary gun and air bombardment was considered necessary against Parry Island than against Eniwetok or Engebi Islands. Engebi Island had received some 6,765 shells from 5-inch to 16-inch (1,180 tons) but Eniwetok only about 5,432 shells, with none larger than 8-inch. Over the next two days 11,740 shells were dropped on Parry's 200 acres, of which 945 tons were naval bombardment and 245 tons were artillery bombardment. When this

[54] Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls*, p. 360.

[55] CTG 51.11 Action Report, 7 Mar. 1944, Encl (A), p. 9.

[56] (a) CTG 58.4 132130 Feb. 1944; (b) CINCPAC 152240 Feb. 1944; (c) CINCPAC 092217 Feb. 1944.

tonnage was added to the initial gun bombardment along with the air bombardment, Parry Island was really mauled with much of its heavy foliage stripped away and damage inflicted on all above ground installations and to some of the network of underground entrenchments.

Rear Admiral Hill reported that: "During this bombardment practically all remaining ammunition in the attack force was utilized." [57]

A further major change of plans was made, substituting the 22nd Marine Regiment for the 106th Infantry Regiment for the assault on Parry, since the majority of the latter were still busy on Eniwetok. Two Marine Battalion Landing Teams would make the assault, with the Third Marine Battalion Landing Team, initially in the Regimental Reserve, but scheduled to land on order and participate in the fight to capture the southern part of Parry Island. One makeshift Provisional Battalion from the 10th Marine Defense Battalion, just arrived at Eniwetok Atoll on 21 February as part of the Garrison Force, and one Battalion Landing Team from the 106th Infantry Regiment, would form the Task Group Reserve.

Artillery emplaced on Japtan Island to the north and on the eastern end of Eniwetok Island to the southwest provided artillery support.

A real assist had resulted when:

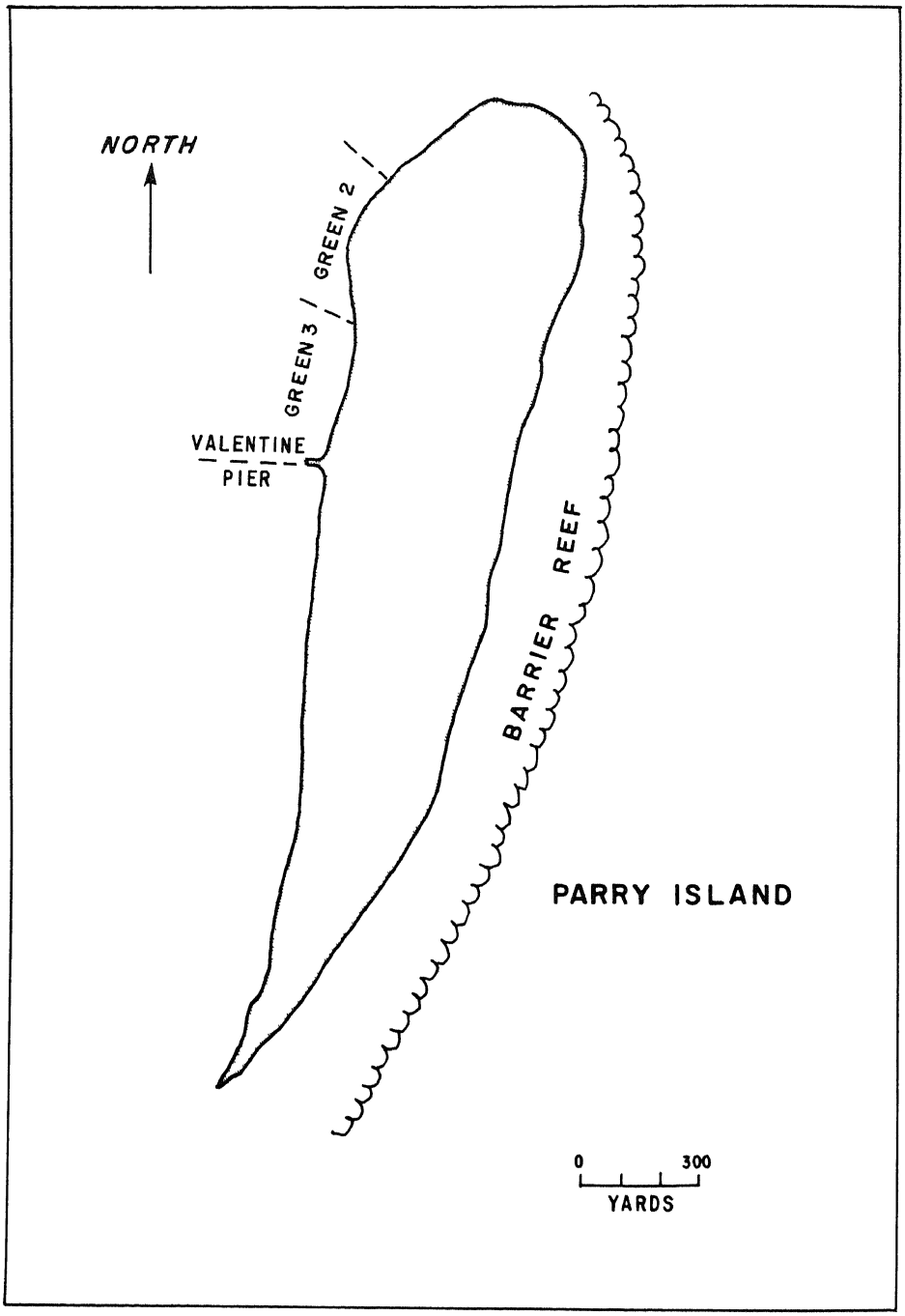
> On Eniwetok on the 20th was found a map showing the detailed Japanese plans for the defense of Parry Island, approved 27 January 1944. . . .[58]

A very last minute change in Marine landing plans shortened and shifted the landing beach area.

The Marines were landed at 0900 but the initial wave was some 300 yards to the south of the designated landing beaches, marked by the remains of a pier, although on target for the beaches designated in the original Marine Landing Plan. The smoke and dust generated by the heavy bombardment which drifted westward with the easterly 21-knot wind generally has been ascribed as the cause of the error, as the landing craft were headed about directly into the wind. But a more realistic appraisal would seem to be that the change in location of the beaches did not reach the lowly Boat Wave Commanders in time, although Commander Transport Division 30 lists "New Green Two and New Green Three" in his "Addenda J" to Appendix 4 to Annex How. The available written reports indicate an on-the-button landing. One, for example, states:

[57] CTG 51.11 Action Report, p. 9.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 58.



Parry Island.

> All waves were despatched and reached the beach on schedule. . . . The formation and movement of the waves was excellent in all respects.[59]

Additionally, the destroyer *Hailey* mistakenly fired upon three LCI(G)s supporting the landing approach, resulting in heavy personnel losses to these newly created gunboats. Commander LCI(L) Division 15 reported that the smoke from the shore bombardment, blowing down towards the boat waves reduced the visibility to 400 yards and produced a navigational problem for the assault.

But the Marines were landed on schedule, although a bit off base, and the LCI(G)s fired their rockets as scheduled. This ability to carry through under real difficulties caused the Task Group Commander to report:

> I cannot praise too highly the resolution and devotion to duty displayed by the officers and men manning these ships.[60]

The Marines moved steadily forward and, despite some land mines, blasted out the Japanese spider-web defensive systems with grenades, flame throwers, and demolition charges. One troop-support close-gunfire mission was requested. This was refused by the Commander Headquarters Support Aircraft, Captain Richard F. Whitehead, believing that friendly troops were too close to the target designated. When the upper echelons of command were bypassed with a second request on another radio circuit, and the gunfire provided, Marine casualties occurred. By nightfall all but 450 yards at the southern end of Parry had been overrun.

Large-scale star shell illumination was maintained over Parry Island throughout the night of 22–23 February, the first such extended continued large-scale use in the Pacific amphibious campaigns.

Mopping up operations on Parry were completed on 23 February, Dog plus six, and the Eniwetok Operation was officially over. By 27 February 1944, Navy planes were operating from Engebi Airstrip.

THE BATTLE IS OVER

COMCENPAC sent his victory message on 23 February, and said:

> The speed with which the operation was planned and carried out reflected great credit on all the amphibians.[61]

[59] COMTRANSDIV 30 (CTU 51.14.3) Action Report, p. 4.
[60] CTG 51.11 Action Report.
[61] COMCENPACFOR 232153 Feb. 1944.

GUN SUPPORT

It has been pointed out that Engebi and Parry Island received the larger share of air bombing and gun bombardment. These two islands were secured in one day each but, in between, Eniwetok took three days of hard fighting. Part of the reason can be found in the inadequate use of close gun and close air support. There were only 28 requests for troop support missions. Of these, 24 were fulfilled. Rear Admiral Hill reported that "in spite of the ideal opportunity offered on Eniwetok Island, little use was made of call fire from destroyers assigned this mission." [62]

AIR SUPPORT—ENIWETOK

Lieutenant Clifford Pruefer in his report of air support operations noted:

> The Marines made only two requests for air support (none accomplished), although they did most of the fighting. The Army troops obtained more than 20 air support missions, with good results. . . . The Marines seemed to prefer destroyer and artillery fire to the heavies dropped from the air. . . .[63]

LOGISTICS

Associated with the establishment of assault forces, logistic problems were many. Some ingenious logistical solutions were produced, among which the following at Engebi is noteworthy:

> Demolition squads attempted to clear a channel for LSTs to beach by blasting coral heads during forenoon. . . . The survey indicated it would be possible to beach LSTs at high water. . . . LST-31 beached successfully, and at 1500 LST–484 grounded about 125 feet from beach line. . . . At 1900 an LCT(6) was moved between LST–484 and beach and unloading was begun using LCT(6) as a causeway.[64]

Back-up logistic support for the advancing amphibious forces was also moving forward in the Pacific. The establishment of Service Squadron Four in Funafuti in the Ellice Islands was followed by the establishment of Service Squadron Ten in Majuro. With this latter move our mobile logistical support was 2,000 miles closer to Japan than at Pearl Harbor.

[62] CTG 51.11 Action Report, p. 79.

[63] Lieutenant Clifford Pruefer, USNR, Report on Support Aircraft Operations, 23 Mar. 1944, p. 5. Filed under Support Aircraft FIFTH PHIBFOR.

[64] COMLSTGRP 8 War Diary, 20 Feb. 1944.

THE COST

Eniwetok Atoll had been secured with the loss of 348 dead and 866 wounded. The majority were Marines who fought on all three islands and on every day of the period, 17–23 February. Sixty-six prisoners were captured, 2,665 Japanese were reported buried by our forces but since some 3,400 Japanese were on the atoll, the rest must have been buried by the heavy air and gun bombardments.

An examination of the Japanese equipment and material at Eniwetok indicated that this atoll would have been a lot more difficult and costly to assault had the initial assault been long delayed. Many new and unmounted guns from 20-millimeter to 5-inch had recently been received at Eniwetok Atoll as well as large amounts of concrete, steel reinforcing rods and numerous land mines. Eniwetok Atoll was in the process of becoming a tough nut to crack and the assault against it was conducted none too soon.

Another fortunate circumstance, as noted by Admiral Spruance was:

> Whatever the cause, the delay on the part of the enemy in sending submarines into the Gilberts and in reinforcing his striking air strength in the Marshalls enabled us to capture our objectives with much less interference from these arms than might have been anticipated.[65]

No Japanese airplane was seen at Eniwetok Atoll during the whole assault phase.

AMPHIBIOUS ROUND UP

Rear Admiral Turner restated his convictions in regard to rehearsals in his final report on the Marshall Island operations. It is well worth repeating:

> Careful and detailed rehearsals of scheduled attacks against defended positions are considered to be a most important feature of the preparation of assault forces for amphibious operations. . . . Elementary and basic amphibious training provide only for the improvement in technique of the individual, and of battalions or sometimes regiments. On the other hand, the assembly of a large amphibious attack force brings together numerous units of different arms and services which may never have operated together, or have had contact with each other. Since a very high degree of coordination is required for a successful assault, the activities of each of these elements must be carefully dovetailed with those of the numerous other previously unrelated elements. Personal cooperation between strangers is involved.

[65] COMCENPACFLT Report on GALVANIC Operations, Ser 00156 of 10 Dec. 1943, p. 1.

> Detailed supervision is required, if a smooth working team is to be produced, and this supervision is exercised by a relatively small number of experienced personnel. Battle rehearsals provide the means for amalgamating the varied elements of assault task forces into cohesive organizations, and of testing and perfecting the numerous detailed plans that have been drawn up. The final rehearsal period in this, as in previous operations, was too short.[66]

Some of the lessons of Makin and Tarawa were modified by the experience at Roi-Namur, Kwajalein and Eniwetok Atoll, but others were fully confirmed. Among these were:

a. The special effort made to organize, train and coordinate the beach and shore parties well in advance of the operation paid off. As Rear Admiral Turner noted: "The beach parties and Beach Masters functioned in excellent fashion." [67]

b. The technique for determining underwater hydrography and obstacles in the beach approaches was highly successful. Close beach reconnaissance became a standard part of the pre-assault period.

c. The need of a complete rehearsal and post-rehearsal critique and the advantages to be obtained therefrom were reaffirmed. Stressed was the necessity of the aircraft from the Fast Carrier Task Forces to participate in both of these events.

d. The LVTs and DUKWs conclusively proved their value for landing across reefs. The DUKWs, a United States Army amphibious development, were introduced to Pacific Ocean amphibian warfare at Kwajalein.

e. The LSTs and LCTs proved their great usefulness and versatility, although during secondary phases of the assault landings as was noted by one subordinate commander: "LCTs have a tendency to hole up somewhere" and enjoy life.

f. A good deal of palletized cargo had to be broken down before sending it into the beaches in LVTs and DUKWs.

g. The dropping of parachute flares by the air coordinator's plane from about 2,000 feet altitude, as a signal that the leading wave of amtracs was 500 yards from the beach and all naval gunfire artillery and air support should be shifted inland, worked well at all landings except at Parry Island.

h. Strafing by aircraft in support of the first waves of the assault land-

[66] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR FLINTLOCK Report, pp. 17–18.
[67] CTF 53 FLINTLOCK Report, p. 10.

ings was changed at Kwajalein Atoll from the parallel approach to runs perpendicular to the track of the landing waves. This permitted the strafing to be conducted safely when the lead waves were only 300–500 yards from the beach, and was more effective.

i. Early waves of assault troops should be aboard LSTs carrying amtracs prior to Dog Day in order to avoid delays incidental to the rendezvous of boats with the LVTs.

New lessons learned were:

a. Artillery could be successfully landed from DUKWs.
b. Continuous star shells considerably reduced the number and effectiveness of Japanese night counterattacks.
c. Logistic support bases in the forward areas, where LSTs could reload and carry major parts of the logistic load to the objective, were needed.
d. The organization and training of island garrison forces must be undertaken before embarking them for islands taken from the Japanese.
e. The new gunboats—LCI(G)s—and their close fire support of the beach assault waves were an essential part of the landings.

One of the minor favorable results of the FLINTLOCK Operation was the opportunity to examine a Japanese submarine found broken in two in Kwajalein Atoll and some of its torpedoes.

It does not seem possible, but at this late date, January 1944, the Fleet tugs accompanying the Joint Expeditionary Force did not have voice radio installed.[68]

The merchant ships handling garrison troops and cargoes had had many problems in GALVANIC, but a lesser number in FLINTLOCK, due to the improvement in communication equipment and the greater experience of the officers assigned to the staffs of the Garrison Groups. A further improvement would result later in such task groups, by the change in the Transport Doctrine which would put a naval detachment commander and a cargo officer on each auxiliary transport (XAP) and auxiliary cargo ship (XAK). Additionally, CINCPOA issued comprehensive instructions covering (a) "Loading and Unloading Ships and Cargoes," (b) "Pallets," and (c) "Identification and Storage of Supplies," which spread the experience gained in

[68] *Tawasa* (ATF-92) War Diary, 29 Jan. and 15 Feb. 1944.

GALVANIC to all the merchant ships that participated in FLINTLOCK and later operations.[69]

SUMMARY

According to the draft narrative history of the Amphibious Forces Pacific Fleet, 191 ships and landing craft took part in the initial GALVANIC Operations in November 1943, excluding the ships of the Submarine Force and Service Force which supported the operation but were not under the command of Rear Admiral Turner or Vice Admiral Spruance. Thirty-five of these 191 were in Task Force 52 and 56 were in Task Force 53 which together as TF 54 were under Rear Admiral Turner's command. These 91 ships and landing craft carried 35,000 Joint Expeditionary Force troops.

The assault phase of FLINTLOCK was much larger. In the Joint Expeditionary Force there were 276 ships and landing craft carrying 53,400 assault troops and 31,000 troops in the Reserve and Garrison Forces. The gun bombardments of Kwajalein Atoll and Eniwetok Atoll expended 18,000 tons of ammunition.[70]

RECOGNITION OF SUCCESS: SPRUANCE AND TURNER

While the Kwajalein operations were still going on, Admiral Nimitz sent a despatch for Admiral King's eyes only, which said among other things:

> In view of the marked capabilities and devotion to duty of Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, his proficiency in amphibious operations as demonstrated in the South Pacific, the Gilberts, and currently at Kwajalein, I recommend his immediate promotion to the grade of Vice Admiral.[71]

Admiral King bounced a despatch back:

> How about Spruance?

Admiral Nimitz immediately replied with a loud

> Yes.[72]

[69] (a) CTG 51.6 FLINTLOCK Report, Ser 0011 of 18 Feb. 1944; (b) CINCPOA, Ser 01228 of 2 Apr. 1944.

[70] COMINCH Operational Analysis, FLINTLOCK Operation, 12 Feb. 1944.

[71] CINCPAC to COMINCH, 030323 Feb. 1944.

[72] (a) COMINCH to SECNAV, 041259 Feb. 1944; (b) SECNAV to COMINCH, 042120 Feb. 1944; (c) COMINCH to CINCPOA, 121451 Feb. 1944.

The Secretary of the Navy was in the Marshalls and his approval was obtained.

It took a bit of doing at the Washington level to make this recommendation in regard to Rear Admiral Turner a reality. A look at the *Congressional Record* for February 1944 does not indicate when the nominations from the Navy Department for the promotion of Vice Admiral Spruance and Rear Admiral Turner reached the Senate. Presumably they both reached there on the same day. Admiral Spruance's nomination to be an admiral for temporary service was reported favorably by the Committee on Naval Affairs, headed by Senator Walsh of Massachusetts, on 15 February and was confirmed by the Senate on 16 February 1944. The Senate met on Thursday, 17 February, but took a recess over 18th, 19th, and 20th, and then met on the 21st only to recess over George Washington's Birthday until Thursday, 24 February 1944, when it met for only three minutes.

On 20 February 1944, Admiral Nimitz queried Admiral King in regard to the progress being made on Rear Admiral Turner's promotion, since Vice Admiral Spruance's promotion had already been effected.[73]

On Friday, the 25th, Senator Walsh favorably reported the nomination of Rear Admiral Turner to the Senate. The Senate next met on the following Tuesday, and again on Thursday, 2 March, but took no action on this nomination.

The following extract from the *Congressional Record* tells the story of Friday, 3 March 1944, when the Senate met again.

> March 3
>
> The legislature clerk read the nomination for Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner to be Vice Admiral in the Navy, for temporary service.
>
> MR. DANAKER. Mr. President, as I understand it, it is the purpose of the Senator from New Mexico shortly to move that the Senate take a recess until Tuesday. [March 7th]
>
> MR. HATCH. That is true.
>
> MR. DANAKER. Mr. President, in view of the fact that several senators from the committee on Naval Affairs are necessarily absent, I respectfully ask that the Senator from New Mexico not press for action on this confirmation. There is no reflection whatsoever upon the individual nominee, I have not the slightest doubt that he is entitled in every respect to the promotion which has been suggested.
>
> MR. HATCH. So far as I know, there is absolutely no objection to the confirmation of this nomination. However, in view of what the Senator from Connecticut has said, inasmuch as he has stated that he has no desire to object

[73] CINCPAC to COMINCH, 202903 Feb. 1944.

> to the nomination in making his request, I am glad to accede to the request of the Senator from Connecticut and ask that the nomination be passed over.
>
> MR. DANAKER. I should like to have it noted that there is no objection on my part to the nomination.
>
> THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection the nomination will be passed over.[74]

On the following Tuesday, 7 March 1944, when the Senate was next in session, Senator Hill moved that the nomination of Rear Admiral Turner to Vice Admiral be confirmed. Senator White "hoped that the request of the Senator will be concurred in." And this concurrence was given. The travail was over. The Bureau of Naval Personnel notified Rear Admiral Turner that day.

The written evidence unearthed by this researcher as to what went on behind the scenes in delaying favorable action on this nomination is near nil.

Admiral Conolly told this scribe that he was in Washington at this time on leave, and was sent up to Capitol Hill in early March 1944 to talk to Senator Brewster of Maine who was a member of the Naval Affairs Committee about the promotion, and that Senator Brewster told him that a Congressman from Massachusetts, who had had a son killed at the Battle of Savo Island, was the major objector to the promotion.

Substantiation for the presence of Rear Admiral Conolly in Washington at this critical juncture is found in a personal letter of 2 March 1944 to Rear Admiral Turner from Captain James H. Doyle, then on duty in COMINCH Headquarters, which said in part:

> Rear Admiral Conolly arrived yesterday. He is scheduled to tell about Roi and Namur this morning.

When Admiral Nimitz was questioned on the delay he replied that he had been told by, he thought, Vice Admiral Randall Jacobs, Chief of Naval Personnel, that the heavy Marine Corps losses at Tarawa had been raised as a major objection, coupled with Rear Admiral Turner's involvement in the Savo Island defeat.

Admiral Turner mentioned the matter only indirectly to me, saying:

> It wasn't until my nomination to vice admiral was delayed by back stairs talk in the Senate, that I realized the importance of an officer having a favorable public image as well as a high professional reputation.[75]

Richmond Kelly Turner's public image, if accurately reflected by *Time*

[74] *Congressional Record* (78th Congress, 2nd sess), Vol. 90, 13 Mar. 1944.
[75] Turner.

Magazine in early 1944, was at snake-belly level. Its 7 February 1944 issue named Turner as a "mean son-of-a-bitch" and backed this description up with a dozen paragraphs of depreciating biography. When Spruance and Turner actually were promoted one grade, *Time* said with scorn:

> This recognition of the two men who ran the Marshall show was also a sop to the admirals at sea.[76]

In complete contrast, *Time* had a glowing six column spread on Major General Holland M. Smith, USMC, in its issue of 21 February 1944.[77]

MAJOR GENERAL HOLLAND M. SMITH, USMC, PROMOTED

In commenting on Rear Admiral Turner's promotion and that of Major General Holland M. Smith to lieutenant general, whose nomination was reported to the Senate on 13 March 1944 and confirmed the next day, the author of *Soldiers of the Sea* has this to say in a footnote:

> What General Smith, who had been a major general in 1941 when Admiral Turner was only a captain (and had enjoyed relative seniority of either one or two grades over Turner during much of the period prior to 1944) might have added, but did not, was that an unexplained feature of his and Turner's 1944 promotion to three stars was a Navy Department reversal of their relative rank; Turner's new date of rank was 4 February 1944 while Smith's was 28 February.[78]

The facts of the matter are quite different. The only time General Smith had ever been two ranks senior to Admiral Turner since the two officers were both commissioned were two days in October 1941. Major General Smith won that rank on 1 October 1941 and Captain Turner was promoted to rear admiral (lower half) on 3 October 1941.

General Smith was commissioned as a second lieutenant five years before Admiral Turner was commissioned an ensign. Despite this, in the 33½ years that both had been commissioned, Turner had been senior to Smith in two ranks and for a period of nearly 15 years (7 December 1919 until 29 May 1934).

Actually Major General Smith's commission as a temporary lieutenant general (and when promoted he was the only lieutenant general in the Marine Corps other than the Commandant of the Corps), dated from the

[76] *Time* Magazine, 7 February 1944, p. 19.

[77] *Ibid.*, 21 February 1944, pp. 25–27, 29.

[78] Robert S. Heinl, *Soldiers of the Sea* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1962), note 38, p. 637.

day the recommendation was approved at the highest levels in the Navy Department, just as Rear Admiral Turner's commission as a temporary vice admiral dated from the day, 4 February 1944, when his promotion was approved at the Navy Department's highest level. On the despatch received from Admiral Nimitz recommending Major General Smith for promotion to lieutenant general, there is this personal memo by Admiral King:

> Hold until Feb 26th K
> Memo to ComMarCorps to make up nomination of General Smith to Lt. Gen. K.[79]

The promotion went forward from COMINCH's office on 26 February and cleared the other echelons on 28 February, when it was so dated.

EVALUATION OF THE FLINTLOCK EFFORT

Admiral Spruance's biographer wrote:

> . . . Spruance himself considered that, among the major operations, it [FLINTLOCK] gave the most gain for the least cost. Its success justified Spruance's insistence on assaulting the Gilberts first. Not only was the experience gained at Tarawa put to very profitable use, but the contribution of our aircraft operating from the Gilbert's was of inestimable value.[80]

THE MEAT OF THE MATTER

In forwarding the FLINTLOCK Report of a subordinate, Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly put on paper the major fundamental of amphibious operations:

> Cooperation and team work are the basis for successful amphibious operation. These can and must be achieved, if necessary, by either of the two participants, Naval or Landing Force, at times going more than half-way to solve the Joint problems presented. COMTRANSDIV 26, by placing blame entirely on his embarked troop unit, reflects on his own responsibility to obtain the requisite teamwork.[81]

KIND WORDS

After Eniwetok had been captured, the Secretary of the Navy sent a congratulatory message to Rear Admiral Turner:

[79] COMINCH to CINCPOA, 142139 Feb. 1944.
[80] Forrestel, *Spruance,* p. 103.
[81] COMFIFTHPHIBFORGRP Three to COMPHIBFORPAC, letter, A16-3/6639/15 Mar. 1944.

On behalf of the entire Navy I send sincere congratulations to you and All Hands under your command on brilliant planning and outstanding accomplishments of recent campaigns. The country is proud of you all and confident of your continued successful progress westward.

But sunshine really broke out of the clouds when Major General Holland M. Smith expressed his feelings in the following letter:

01/180 FORWARD ECHELON
Ser. 0024–2 HEADQUARTERS, FIFTH AMPHIBIOUS CORPS
Fleet Post Office, San Francisco

SECRET 8 February 1944

From: The Commanding General.
To: The Commander, Fifth Amphibious Force.

Subject: Letter of Appreciation.

1. Upon the eve of his return to PEARL, the Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, wishes to express his deep appreciation to the Commander, Fifth Amphibious Force, for the whole hearted and complete support given to the V Amphibious Corps in its capture of the KWAJALEIN Atoll. The successful termination of this operation was made possible by the full support of all units of the Force.

2. May it suffice to say that this Corps takes pride in serving under the Force, and with it behind us we would storm the very gates of Hell.

/s/ H. M. SMITH

Copy to: ComCentPac

Original given to Admiral Turner

CHAPTER XXI

The Nut Cracker
Saipan—Tinian—Guam

As was stated earlier, Rear Admiral Turner remained at Kwajalein Atoll until the capture of Eniwetok Atoll had been completed and the garrison forces were readying to take over. He departed in his flagship, *Rocky Mount,* for Pearl Harbor on 25 February 1944, entering that port on 3 March 1944. During the long, long month commencing on 5 February, he had been sitting on the anxious seat waiting for his promotion to Vice Admiral to be approved by the United States Senate, and more than a bit disturbed by the backstairs gossip surrounding the delay. The hard-fought assaults on Kwajalein and Roi-Namur, and then on Engebi, Eniwetok and Parry, combined with this backlash had worn him down to a nubbin.

In an off-hand remark to me he said:

> When I came back from the Marshalls, I was dead tired. I stayed dead tired for the rest of the war.[1]

When this remark was mentioned to Fleet Admiral Nimitz, he leaned back in his chair, his weathered face wreathed in a soft smile, and he spoke softly:

> Kelly was operating under a forced draft. There were times during this period when I wanted to reach out and shake Kelly. But Spruance always said: 'Let me handle him' and handle him he did.
>
> I always attended rehearsals that were held in the Hawaiian Islands. Kelly had a firm hold on rehearsals and did a magnificent job. His insistence on rehearsals was a major factor in his success.

And then after a pause, Fleet Admiral Nimitz, the Grand Old Man of the Pacific War, added:

> I became very much attached to him.[2]

It must be added in all honesty that from this period in the war on, an

[1] Turner.
[2] Nimitz.

ever increasing number of old shipmates were aware that Kelly Turner was partaking more freely of the liquid that cheers, but all reports indicated that he was handling it extremely well.

THE OVERALL PROBLEM OF DEFEATING JAPAN

As Admiral Turner said in 1949 in a speech before the General Line School:

> To defeat the Japanese, we had long recognized that we must plan ultimately either to invade the home islands or else destroy their armies in Manchuria and North China, and then isolate the home islands by blockade. We also needed to weaken their industry by strategic air bombing in order to reduce their logistics potential at home. Thus it was necessary for us to concentrate large military forces, land, sea, and air, plus heavy stocks of material in bases reasonably close to Japan. In turn, that meant that we required large land deployment areas and large harbors in the Western Pacific Ocean. . . .
>
> The only possible suitably adequate areas were the Philippines, Formosa and China, and of these the Philippines was much the best. . . .[3]

PLANNING FOR THE PACIFIC WAR

Out of the SEXTANT American-British Conference ending at Cairo, Egypt, on 6 December 1943, came the necessary approved plan to conduct the war against Japan throughout 1944.

The Combined Chiefs of Staff and our own Chiefs of Staff never lacked for suggestions or recommendations from the Pacific or the Southwest Pacific commands as to how the war against Japan might be won. And frequently they received contrary recommendations from Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur.

In December 1943, the scales were tipped very lightly in favor of doing what Admiral Nimitz recommended.

The Combined Chiefs of Staff, acting in accordance with the recommendations of our Joint Chiefs, did not decide against General MacArthur's plan of advance along the New Guinea-Netherland Indies-Philippine axis. In fact, they decided that one advance would be made along this north-south line toward Japan and another advance would be made along an east-west

[3] Admiral R. K. Turner, USN (Ret.), Presentation delivered before the General Line School, Monterey, California, 5 Dec. 1949, subj: Major Aspect of the Marianas Campaign.

line passing through the Marianas. The two lines of advance they hoped would be mutually supporting during the early phases. The Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that when conflicts over resources occurred, the Central Pacific Campaign would have priority over the Southwest Pacific Campaign, primarily because it held greater promise of a more rapid advance toward Japan and her essential lines of communication with the south to bring natural resources into the homeland.[4]

Based on these high level decisions, Admiral Nimitz promulgated his GRANITE Plan. This covered the prospective operations against the Japanese in the Central Pacific Ocean Area during 1944.

As desired by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Marshall Islands would be assaulted early in 1944, with Eniwetok being taken about 1 May 1944. About 15 August, the Mortlock Islands (160 miles southeast of Truk) and Truk Atoll in the Carolines would be taken. Then, about 15 November 1944, Saipan, Tinian, and Guam would be assaulted simultaneously, if possible.[5]

All during this period, Admiral King held to the firm opinion that the Marianas were the key to the Western Pacific since, from the Marianas, we could quite easily cut the Japanese line of communications to the Netherland East Indies and Malaysia and from there could bomb Japan.[6]

Admiral King also believed that reaching the mainland of China was a major objective of the drive through the center of the Pacific Ocean. This was in order to take advantage strategically, not only of China's geographical position but of her huge manpower.

Two things happened in the first seven weeks of 1944 to change the strategic picture further in our favor.

1. The Japanese Combined Fleet retreated from Truk Atoll to the Palau Islands in the Western Carolines.
2. Eniwetok was taken in late February, rather than in early May.

Admiral Nimitz, soon after Eniwetok was firmly in hand, wrote to the Commander in Chief, United States Fleet:

> The capture and consolidation of Kwajalein, Majuro, and Eniwetok, together with the successful Fleet operations against Truk and the Marianas, have

[4] CCS 417, Report by JPS, 2 Dec. 1943, subj: Overall Plan for Defeat of Japan.

[5] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Campaign Plan GRANITE—Preliminary Draft, 27 Dec. 1943; Outline of Campaign Plan, 13 Jan. 1944.

[6] *King's Record,* pp. 532–535.

> created changes in the strategic situation which permits advancing the timing of operations contemplated by the GRANITE Plan.[7]

In a long reasoned discussion, Admiral Nimitz then developed two proposed schedules of future operations, one in which Truk would be assaulted 15 June 1944, with the Southern Marianas assault to follow on 1 September 1944. The other schedule called for Truk to be neutralized and by-passed, and the Southern Marianas to be assaulted on 15 June 1944. Subsequently, Woleai, Yap and the Palaus (about 1060 miles southeast of Manila) were to be captured by 1 November 1944 (later changed to 1 October).[8]

Admiral Nimitz believed that following the latter schedule, which advanced the assault date on the Marianas by two and a half months, would permit readiness of his forces in the Pacific Ocean Areas to launch a major assault in the Formosa-Luzon-China area in the spring of 1945.

While awaiting the decision by Admiral King and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Nimitz's Staff would not be idle. The Admiral wrote Admiral King that: "Plans are being drawn up and forces prepared for either objective [Truk or the Southern Marianas.]."

It should be recorded here that there was some naval opposition and considerable lack of enthusiasm for the operation to take the Southern Marianas. This arose because of the complete inadequacy of the harbors in Saipan and Tinian and the limited capacity of Apra Harbor, Guam. For a satisfactory mobile logistic support base in this general area it would be necessary for the Pacific Fleet to go 400 miles southwest of Guam to Ulithi Atoll in the Western Caroline Islands. Eniwetok had a fine anchorage, but the rim islands were all too small for the development of shore-based storage and work shop activities. Moreover, it was located a thousand miles back towards Pearl Harbor from the Marianas.

Admiral Nimitz's letters to COMINCH and later visits to Washington were occurring against a background of strong urging by General MacArthur during January and February 1944, to do something quite different with the naval forces of the Central Pacific.

In early February 1944, General MacArthur was pressing for the commitment of large combatant Pacific Fleet forces on a long continuing basis to support his advance toward the Philippines. In a despatch he said:

[7] (a) CINCPOA to COMINCH, letter, 22 Feb. 1944; (b) CINCPOA to COMINCH, letter, Ser 00025 of 1 Mar. 1944.

[8] Nimitz to King, memorandum, 8 Mar. 1944, subj: Sequence and timing of operations central Pacific Campaigns.

> I propose that with the completion of the operations in the Marshalls, the maximum force from all sources in the Pacific be concentrated in my drive up the New Guinea coast to Mindanao, to be coordinated with a Central Pacific Operation against the Palaus and the support by combatant elements of the Pacific Fleet with orders to contain or destroy the Japanese Fleet.[9]

Despite the firm decision of the Combined Chiefs and the Joint Chiefs of December 1943, that the Central Pacific campaign would have priority, General MacArthur sought to advance his own proposals by sending his Chief of Staff and supporting officers to Pearl Harbor, and then on to Washington.

Admiral King thought that the proposal to divert major naval resources from the Central Pacific to the Southwest Pacific on a long time basis was "absurd" and so said to anyone within hearing and in a letter to Admiral Nimitz.[10]

On 2 March 1944, the Joint Chiefs avoided meeting the issue head on, but did go so far as to state:

> Our first major objective in the war against Japan will be the vital Luzon-Formosa-China coast area.[11]

This tied in with the Central Pacific Campaign far more realistically than the south-north drive up through New Guinea, particularly when coupled with a Joint Chiefs' cancellation of General MacArthur's proposed assault on Kavieng in New Ireland, and advice to him that the Central Pacific Campaign had priority in military resources over the Southwest Pacific Campaign.

It was another ten days before the seal of approval to the Central Pacific Campaign and the GRANITE Plan was reaffirmed.[12]

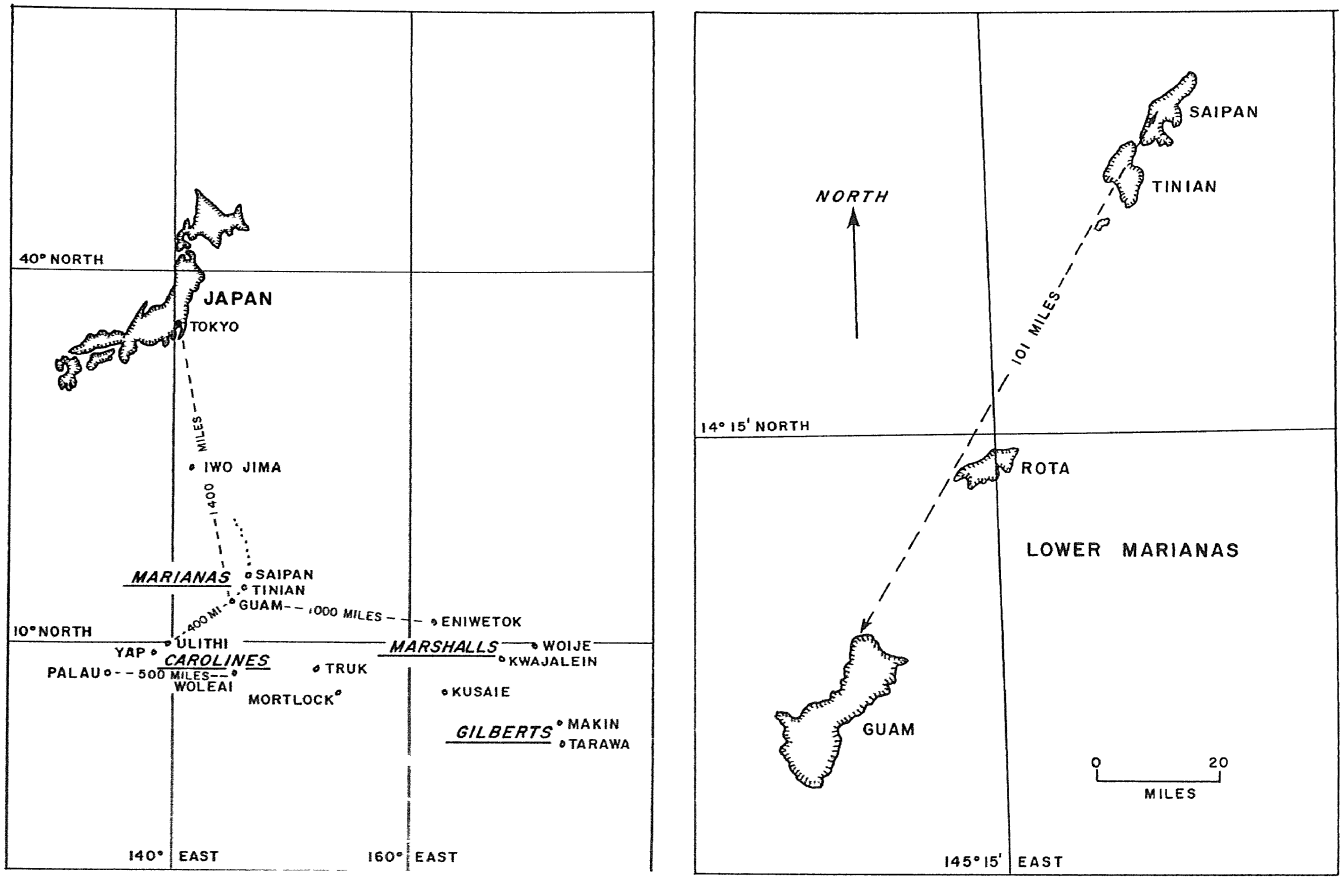
The final Joint Chiefs' decision was to confirm Admiral Nimitz's proposal to assault the Marianas on 15 June 1944. Success in the Marianas, of itself, would largely neutralize Truk and isolate the Central Carolines because it would throttle the main Japanese aircraft pipeline down from the Empire to the Carolines. The Palaus in the far western Carolines would be assaulted on 15 September 1944, with the object of establishing a fleet base there, as well as a forward staging area for later operations against Mindanao, Formosa, and the China coast. If all went well, Mindanao would be assaulted

[9] MacArthur to Marshall C1217, CM-IN-1443, 2 Feb. 1944. Modern Military Records. National Archives.

[10] King to Nimitz, letter, Ser 00409, 8 Feb. 1944.

[11] JCS to COMSOWESPAC and CINCPOA, 022941 2 Mar. 1944.

[12] JCS to COMSOWESPAC and CINCPOA, 122319 12 Mar. 1944.



Pacific and Lower Marianas distance charts.

on 15 November by General MacArthur, supported by the Pacific Fleet, and Luzon or Formosa would be assaulted on 15 February 1945. The object of taking Mindanao was to further the advance to Formosa either directly or via Luzon.

The JCS directed that long-range planning be undertaken for assaults on all three objectives—Luzon, Formosa, and the China coast area—with General MacArthur's Staff undertaking the first, and Admiral Nimitz's staff the latter two.

THE PURPOSES OF THE EXERCISE

The code name of FORAGER was assigned to the capture, occupation, and defense of Saipan, Tinian, and Guam.

The Commander in Chief, Pacific had four principal purposes in mind in launching FORAGER. The obtaining of an island base from which the Japanese homeland could be bombed was the one appealing to all Services, although more strongly to the Army Air Force, since it would permit them to really pull an oar in the Pacific War. A second principal purpose was to obtain a base which would permit the isolation and neutralization of the Central and Western Carolines. This one appealed particularly to the Army as it was anxious to facilitate General MacArthur's movement to the Philippines, and this would be made more practical if, as he advanced, Japanese island positions on his right flank were isolated or neutralized. The other two principal purposes were primarily naval. The Navy thought it was highly desirable to have effective command of the sea in the general Marianas area, and thus a forward position on the flank of the Japanese communication lines to the Philippines and Southeast Asia. This was in order to harass or break these Japanese lines of communication. There also was a strong naval desire to secure a large base from which a direct amphibious assault could be launched against the Ryukus, the Bonins, or the Japanese Homeland.

THE NUT CRACKER

A glance at the detailed chart and maps of Saipan, Tinian and Guam immediately indicates that the Marianas were quite a different cup of tea from Makin or Tarawa or Kwajalein or the other atolls which had been

captured in 1943 and early 1944. Rather than small flat rims of coral, they were good sized islands with all the defensive possibilities which real fortification, rough terrain and tropical growth over large land masses can provide.

And it is worth stating a second time that with the Marianas located over 3,000 miles from Pearl and something less than half that far from Tokyo, it would be far more difficult to establish there the prerequisites for a successful amphibious operation. These are:

1. Secure lines of communication to the zone of conflict.
2. Command of the seas around the objective.
3. Command of the air around the objective.

It has to be kept in mind that an invader is most vulnerable as he hits the beaches. This is the transition period of an amphibious assault.

RESOURCES

Three divisions, which had been earmarked for the sequential assaults on the Mortlock Islands and on Truk, were designated for the invasion of Saipan and the subsequent capture of Tinian. These were the Second and Fourth Marine Divisions, with the 27th Infantry, a National Guard unit from the State of New York, in reserve. They were to be mounted in the Hawaiian Islands, 3,000 miles away.

For the assault on Guam, the Third Marine Division and the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, made up of the 4th Marine Regiment, the 22nd Marine Regiment, and, after 10 July 1944, the 305th Infantry Regiment, were assigned. The units initially assigned were designated the 3rd Amphibious Corps on 15 April 1944, Major General Roy S. Geiger, USMC, Commander. They were to be mounted in Guadalcanal and the New Hebrides, 1,650 to 2,200 miles southeast of Guam. The 77th Infantry Division, training in the United States during the early planning period, was to be brought to the Hawaiian Islands by March, and alerted for a move on to the Marianas twenty days after Dog Day at Saipan. It could not be mounted for a Dog Day assault or as the Guam Reserve because of lack of transports and cargo ships.[13] From this listing of participating troops, it is apparent that the Marianas was to be the biggest amphibious assault to date in the Central Pacific Campaign with three and two-thirds divisions designated for assault and two divisions designated for the Reserve.

[13] (a) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Op Plan 3–44; (b) COMFIFTHFLT Op Plan CEN 10–44.

FORAGER, the Marianas campaign, was complicated. As Admiral Turner said:

> The Marianas Campaign, from an amphibious view point had nearly everything; great strategic importance, major tactical moves including successive troops landings on three enemy islands; tough enemy resistance of all kinds, including major Fleet battle; coordination of every known type of combat technique of the land, sea, and air; difficult logistic problems; and the build up of a great military base area concurrently with the fighting.[14]

Before the operational phases of the Marianas campaign are related, a few of the major changes in the administrative and organizational aspects of the Amphibious Forces, Pacific will be set down.

SHIPS AND LANDING CRAFT AND MORE SHIPS AND MORE LANDING CRAFT

COMINCH, on 1 February 1944, assigned all attack transports, attack cargo ships, and landing ships and craft, in or destined to report to the Pacific Ocean Areas, to Commander Amphibious Forces, Pacific (Rear Admiral R. K. Turner). This broadened his command from the Fifth Amphibious Force in the Central Pacific to all the amphibious forces in the Pacific Ocean Area.[15] On 8 March 1944, Vice Admiral Turner reported to CINCPAC for this additional duty which included command of all amphibious craft assigned to the First, Third, Fifth, and Ninth Fleets; the Amphibious Training Command; and the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps units currently assigned to those Amphibious Forces for training or combat operations. He was also responsible for the preparation and periodic correction of two Pacific Fleet publications entitled *Tactical Orders, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet* and *Current Doctrine for Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet.*

As the Amphibious Forces moved through the Gilberts and the Marshalls, some of the landing ships (LSTs) and many of the landing craft (LCTs) were left behind to provide the necessary unloading lighterage at the island bases. There was a real need to reorganize the landing ships and craft which returned to Pearl with sizeable gaps in their organizations and provide

[14] Turner, Presentation delivered before the General Line School, 5 Dec. 1949.

[15] (a) COMINCH letter, Ser 0400 of 1 Feb. 1944, subj: Assignment of Vessels, U. S. Fleet; (b) CINCPAC PACFLT Confidential letter 6 CL-44, Ser 0956 of 14 Mar. 1944.

appropriate division commanders, group commanders and flotilla commanders. The need was brought to the attention of CINCPAC and COMINCH, and the latter, on 30 March 1944, authorized remedial action. Thereafter, COMPHIBSPAC, acting under delegated authority, reorganized the LSTs, the LCIs and the LCTs, generally on the basis of geographical location. This, as many skippers were quick to report, broke up many fine chains of command which had existed since the landing ships and craft were on the building ways back in the States. Soon afterwards, a more favorably-received step was taken. This was to provide adequate repair facilities for these craft even in the forward areas.

In early April 1944, the first edition of *Transport Doctrine, Amphibious Forces, U. S. Pacific Fleet* was issued. This healthy sized document provided general transport doctrine as well as specific transport doctrine for all types of landing ships and landing craft. It was amended a dozen times before World War II was over, but it served to indoctrinate the tens of thousands of young Americans who were becoming amphibians.[16]

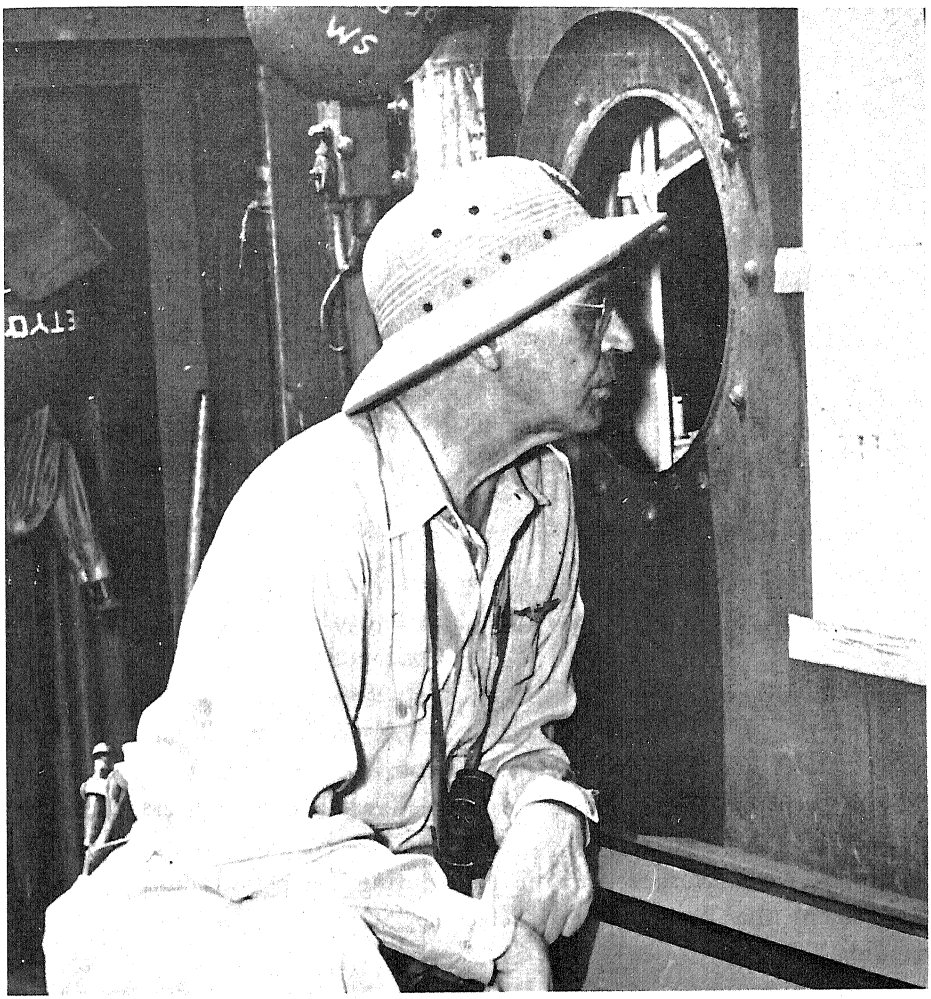
THE FIFTH AMPHIBIOUS FORCE STAFF GROWS AND GROWS

By the time the Fifth Amphibious Force was deep in its training to take the Marianas Islands, Vice Admiral Turner's Staff had grown to thirty officers. The number of officers attached to the staff for communications, intelligence and other specialty duties had increased to 56. The Chief of Staff had been advanced in rank to Commodore early in April 1944.

The officers on the staff on 1 May 1944, were as follows:

Paul S. Theiss	Commodore	1912	Chief of Staff
Don Z. Zimmerman	Colonel (Air Corps)	AUS	Assistant Plans Officer
John P. Vetter	Captain	1920	Plans Officer
Stanley Leith	Captain	1923	Operations Officer
Benjamin O. Wells	Captain (Retired)	1917	Intelligence Officer
George A. Harvey	Lieutenant-Colonel	AUS (1923)	Assistant Military Officer
Robert E. Hogaboom	Lieutenant-Colonel	USMC (1925)	Military Operations
Beverly M. Coleman	Commander	USNR (1922)	Beachmaster Officer
John McN. Taylor	Commander	1926	Gunnery Officer

[16] COMPHIBSPAC, letter, Ser 0226 of 2 Apr. 1944.



80-G-238010

Vice Admiral Turner at porthole, 6 June 1944.

Charles F. Horne, Jr.	Commander	1926	Communications Officer
Clayton O. Totman	Lieutenant-Colonel	USMC (1935)	Assistant Plans Officer
John S. Lewis	Commander	1932	Assistant Naval Operations
W. A. Neal	Major	USMCR	Transport Quartermaster
W. F. Layer	Major	USMCR	Assistant Plans Officer
Frederick L. Ashworth	Lieutenant-Commander	1933	Aviation Officer
Francis C. Bowen	Major	AUS (1931)	Assistant Communications Officer

Cecil W. Shuler	Major	USMC (1939)	Assistant Intelligence Officer
William J. Francis	Lieutenant-Commander	1935	Aerological Officer
Charles W. Weaver	Lieutenant-Commander	USNR (1931)	Assistant Operations Officer
Harry B. Stark	Lieutenant-Commander	1936	Flag Secretary and Aide
John J. Kircher	Lieutenant-Commander	1936	Flag Lieutenant and Aide
Charles W. Coker	Lieutenant-Commander	1937	Assistant Plans Officer
Howard D. Lane	Lieutenant-Commander	USNR (1925)	Assistant Communications Officer
Richard H. Amberg	Lieutenant	USNR (1938)	Assistant Plans Officer
Walter L. Luke	Lieutenant (junior grade)	USNR (1940)	Prospective Flag Lieutenant and Aide
Charles W. Postlewaite	Radio-Electrician	USNR (1943)	Radar Officer
Jacob M. Bregar	Captain (SC)	USNR (1917)	Force Supply Officer
Robert M. Gillett	Captain (MC)	1923	Force Medical Officer
Kenneth G. Lovell	Lieutenant-Commander (CEC)	1939	Force Civil Engineer
Ralph E. Bishop	Chief Pay Clerk	1943	Assistant Force Supply Officer

Year dates are those of first commission or first warrant in the Navy, Marine Corps or Army, or in the case of Naval Reserve officers, their pay entry date.[17]

An officer who worked with this staff during this period and on through the end of the Pacific War labeled it: "Outstanding—incredibly hard working." [18]

KNEEDING FLINTLOCK INTO FORAGER

Although FLINTLOCK was termed a grand success, COMFIFTHPHIBFOR issued a 37-page letter, with comments on the operation and many suggestions for further improvements in the naval phases and naval techniques of the amphibious operations.[19]

[17] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR Roster of Officers, 1 May 1944. No roster is available in the files for 1 June 1944 or 1 July 1944.

[18] Rear Admiral Draper L. Kauffman, USN, to GCD, letter, 6 Dec. 1965 and interview, 9 Dec. 1965. Hereafter Kauffman.

[19] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, letter, C5A/A16-3/Ser 00425 of 12 Apr. 1944, subj: Comments on FLINTLOCK.

On the other hand, the Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, was reasonably satisfied, as this extract from his report indicates:

> Recommendations made and acted upon—as a result of the Gilberts offensive proved sound. In the attack of coral atolls, very few recommendations can be made to improve upon the basic techniques previously recommended and utilized in the Marshalls.[20]

From the time of the conquest of the Marshalls, the DUKW was the major small logistical workhorse of the Central Pacific Campaign, and as Admiral Turner commented:

> The Army's most important contribution to the technique of amphibious warfare.[21]

THE MARIANAS

The Marianas are a 450-mile long string of fifteen volcanic islands lying north and south between Latitudes 13° and 21° north, and generally along the 145th parallel of east longitude.

Guam is the southernmost of the island string. It lies a bit less than 1,400 sea miles south-southeast of Tokyo and 1,500 sea miles east of Manila. 101 miles separate Saipan, the second largest of the Marianas, from Guam. Tinian nestles up to Saipan and Rota is 37 miles northeast of Guam. Eleven smaller islands stretch 350 miles north of Saipan.

Guam also is the largest of the Marianas, with a land area of 206 square miles. Saipan covers 70 square miles and Tinian only 38 square miles. Each of these three islands has both rock-ribbed hills and swampy valleys. Guam has half a dozen rugged peaks over a thousand feet high with the highest being Mount Lamlam of 1,334 feet. Saipan tops out in its center at Mount Tapotchau at 1,554 feet, while smaller Tinian, in general, is flatter with Lasso Hill of 564 feet its highest point. Tropical vegetation, in 1944, covered much of the islands, and there were marshes and rice paddies in the lowlands. The only useful harbors in the group are Apra Harbor in Guam and at Tanapag in Saipan. The latter is very small. The tide in the Marianas is negligible since it is less than 1.5 feet.

Raising sugar cane, copra, bananas, and papayas were the principal activities of the natives in 1944. Seventy percent of Saipan was under sugar cultiva-

[20] CGFIFTHPHIBCORPS FLINTLOCK Report, 6 Mar. 1944.
[21] Turner.



80–G–238000

Vice Admiral Turner on board USS Rocky Mount *during the Saipan attack.*

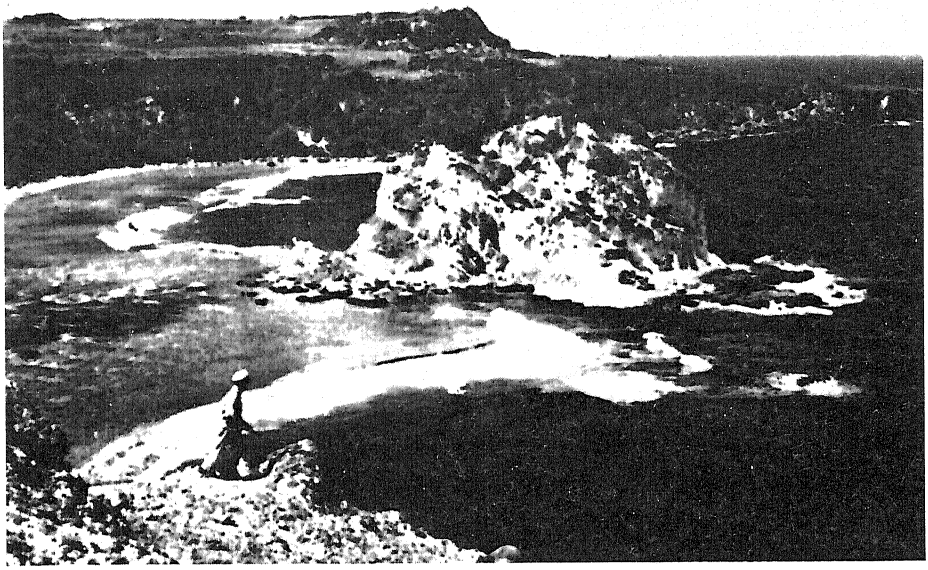
tion. The population of Saipan and Tinian was principally Japanese with a modest proportion of Chammorro's, while that of Guam was entirely Chammorro.[22]

NATURAL DEFENSES

SAIPAN

Looking at the three principal southern islands in 1944 from the amphibious assault viewpoint, it was seen that a barrier reef one to two miles off shore protected the west side of Saipan. The land sloped gently away from the beaches which were extensive but only 10 to 15 yards wide. On the east side, the beaches were narrow and the shores steep with many wave-cut cliffs. The north end and east side of Saipan, except for Magicienne Bay, were free of reefs. This bay provided no shelter from the prevailing

[22] JICPOA Bulletins No. 7–44, Marianas 25 Jan. 1944; No. 34–44, Saipan, Tinian, Rota 10 Mar. 1944; No. 73–44, Saipan, Tinian, Rota, 10 May 1944.



NH 69106

Northeast coast of Saipan.

trade winds and the Japanese, reputedly, had not used the bay because of this and the inshore reefs.

TINIAN

Tinian had the same natural defenses as Saipan's east coast—healthy sized cliffs and very narrow shallow beaches. This would make the logistic support problem very difficult in the early hours of any assault landing.

GUAM

The detailed information available during the 1944 planning period in regard to the beaches of Guam was good, because the Marines had studied the island from a defensive point of view during the pre-1941 period. The northern half of the island was easily defendable because of the high cliffs overlooking the beaches and the strong surf and rugged offshore reefs. The

whole east coast of Guam was marked by a 400-foot plateau and a narrow coastal flat. However, in the vicinity of Agana Bay near the capital Agana, there were some breaks in the long reefs on the western side of the island, and another break south of Orote Peninsula. This peninsula jutted out three miles into the western ocean and provided a lee for the beaches south of it.

THE WEATHER PROSPECTS

In a few words, the weather was warm, showery and generally overcast. The summer months are the rainy season, August being the wettest month with numerous thunderstorms and squalls.

Typhoons are scarce around the Marianas but do occur. The monsoon winds blow in from the southwest in August and September; the trade winds blow from the northeast the rest of the year.

So, from a weather point of view, the landings and early logistic support follow up had to be completed before the end of July, if the landings were to be made on the west coast of Saipan where the preferred beaches were located. The "generally overcast" type of weather meant that air reconnaissance would have photographic and observation problems.[23]

JAPANESE REACTION TO LOSS OF MARSHALLS

Admiral Koga, Commander in Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, made a visit to Japan from Truk soon after our seizure of Kwajalein and Eniwetok in the Marshalls, to participate in military conferences. The Japanese High Command on 1 March 1944 took the decision to build up overseas personnel and material strength, construct fortifications with special emphasis on the Marianas and Western Carolines, and firmly defend their new "Secondary Defense Line." These important defensive steps were planned to be completed by April 1944, and except for planned aircraft and air bases they were largely in hand by the end of May 1944.[24]

A Japanese Central Pacific Area Force secret order captured during the FORAGER Operation indicated that, in the Marianas, Japanese plans contemplated a total of fourteen airfields and two seaplane bases adequate to

[23] (a) JICPOA Bulletins No. 7–44, 25 Jan. 1944; No. 39–44, 26 Feb. 1944; No. 73–44, 10 May 1944; (b) COMFIFTHFLT Op Plan CEN 10–44, Appendix I.

[24] (a) USSBS Interrogation No. 139, p. 143; (b) JICPOA Bulletins, No. 34–44, No. 66–44, No. 23–44; (c) Masanorito Ito, *The End of the Imperial Japanese Navy*, p. 77.

handle 600 aircraft.[25] In the Southern Marianas, by early June 1944, there were two Japanese airfields operational on both Saipan and on Guam, three operational airfields on Tinian and a surfaced runway on Rota. Additional airfields were in various stages of completion. There was a major Japanese seaplane base at Tanapag Harbor on Saipan.

THE JAPANESE DEFENSES

Soon after arriving back in Pearl, and still not sure whether the next amphibious objective would be Truk or the Marianas, COMFIFTHPHIBFOR requested CINCPAC to provide air and submarine reconnaissance of the Carolines and Marianas to supplement that obtained on 22–23 February 1944, during the first air strikes against the Marianas.[26]

This was done by Navy PBYs, flying out of Eniwetok on 18 April and 25 April 1944, and again on 7 May and 29 May 1944. The submarines of the Pacific Fleet during April 1944 gave their particular attention to prospective landing beaches with rewarding results.

THE JAPANESE ON SAIPAN

The natural defenses of Saipan, the first island in the Marianas to be assaulted, were considerable. The east coast was largely free of fringing reefs except around the largest bay—Magicienne Bay—but the beaches were narrow—and more importantly from the Marines' point of view—the shores back of the beaches were steep, rugged and easily defended.

The west coast of Saipan was lower and the land back of the beaches sloped gently upward, which was fine from the Marine point of view. But, with the exception of a gap off Charan Koa and the entrance to Tanapag Harbor, a barrier reef protected the whole west coast of Saipan.

On Saipan the Japanese had an island 12¾ miles long and 5¾ miles wide to defend. In comparison, the later objectives, Tinian was 10.5 miles long and markedly narrower than Saipan, while Guam was 32 miles long and 4 to 8 miles wide.

Beginning in March 1944, the Japanese not only rapidly built up their

[25] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Translation No. 9498, Central Pacific Area Force Secret Order No. 2, dated 21 March 1944.

[26] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR, letter, Ser 00348 of 18 Mar. 1944.

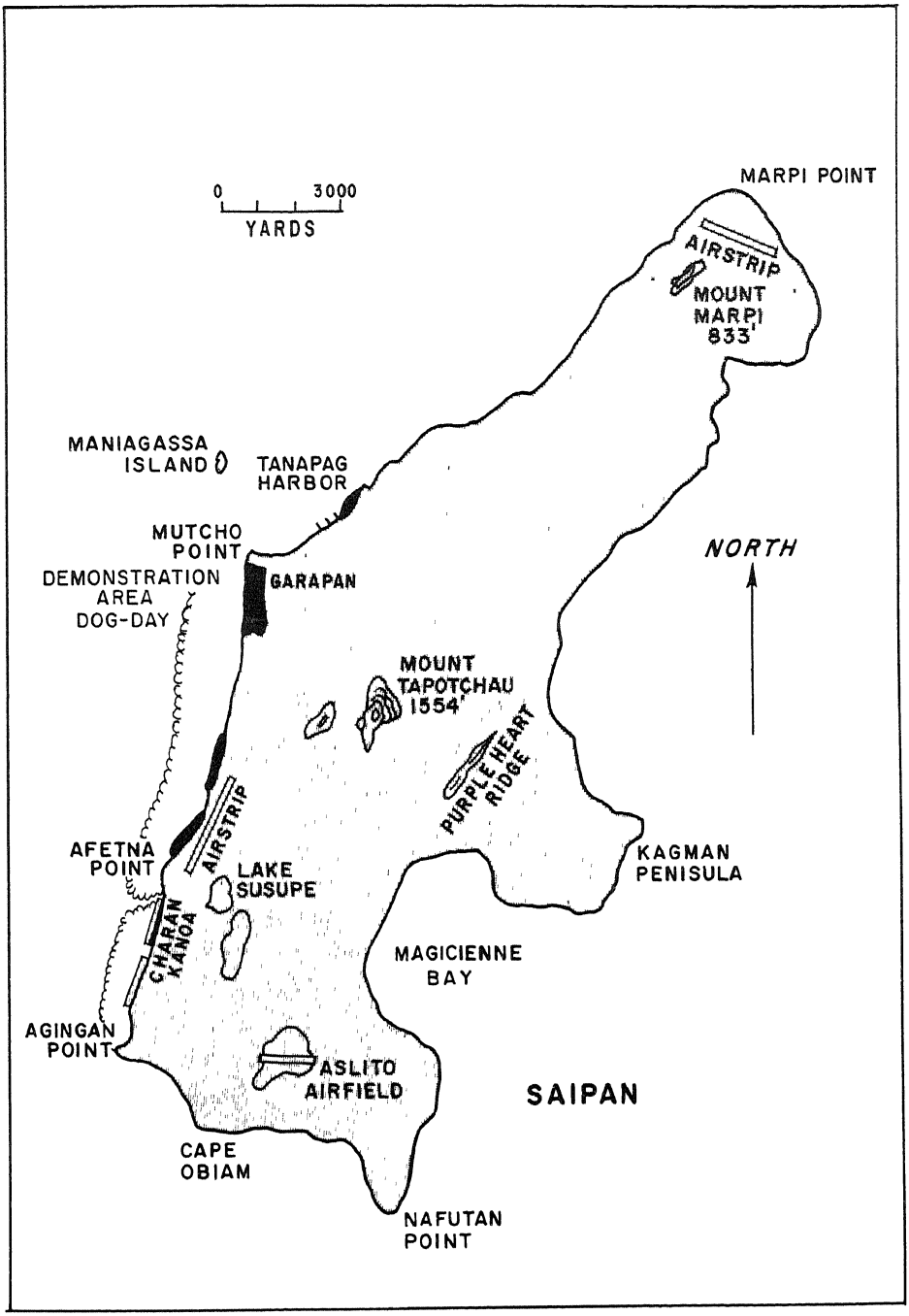
defenses and their defensive forces in the Marianas, but, additionally, reorganized the command structure which controlled the area.

The Fourth Fleet which had held the bag during the loss of the Gilbert Islands and the Marshall Islands was downgraded to controlling only the naval garrisons in the Eastern Carolines (including Truk) and the by-passed garrisons in the Marshalls, all of which were dying on the vine. A new command directly under the Combined Fleet, called the Central Pacific Area Fleet, was established under the command of Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, IJN, who had been commander of the Japanese naval force making the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Vice Admiral Nagumo maintained his Headquarters on Saipan and was present and accounted for when the assault commenced. He controlled the naval garrisons in the Western Carolines where the important Palau Islands were located, as well as the Marianas and the Bonins where Iwo Jima was located. The responsibility for the defense of individual islands rested upon the senior Army or Naval officer assigned to that island. By and large, the Japanese Army was able to place the senior officer on each island.

Saipan also housed the Japanese Army command for all Japanese Army forces in the Mandates. This was the 31st Army. Its Commanding General was Lieutenant General Hideyoshi Obata. He lived a few days longer than others because he was absent from his command and in the Palau Islands for a conference when we landed on 15 June 1944. His senior subordinate, Lieutenant General Yoshitsugu Saito, IJA, Commanding the 43rd Division, took over Obata's duties and fought the good fight.

All during the months of March, April, May, and early June, the Japanese poured troops into the Marianas. They had their troubles doing this as the following extract from an interrogation of Commander Tadao Kuwahara, IJN (Retired), Convoy Commander for part of the movement of the 43rd Division, will show:

> I left Tateyama for Saipan on 30 May 1944 with a convoy of seven vessels and four escorts. Three of the ships were transporting 10,000 troops to Saipan. This was the last convoy to go to Saipan. . . . The convoy was attacked by submarines on the 1st through the 6th of June, all attacks occurring at about 1500–1600. The submarines had been following another convoy bound for Japan. When the two convoys crossed, the submarines turned around and followed my convoy. . . . On 4 June, the convoy was attacked simultaneously from the two front quarters and the port after quarter. *Katsuya Maru* was sunk. On 5 June, we were attacked again from two sides and *Takaoka Maru* and *Tamahime Maru* were sunk. On 6 June we were


0 3000
YARDS
MARPI POINT
AIRSTRIP
MOUNT MARPI 833'
MANIAGASSA ISLAND
TANAPAG HARBOR
MUTCHO POINT
DEMONSTRATION AREA DOG-DAY
GARAPAN
NORTH
MOUNT TAPOTCHAU 1554'
PURPLE HEART RIDGE
AFETNA POINT
AIRSTRIP
LAKE SUSUPE
KAGMAN PENISULA
CHARAN KANOA
MAGICIENNE BAY
AGINGAN POINT
ASLITO AIRFIELD
SAIPAN
CAPE OBIAM
NAFUTAN POINT

Saipan.

> attacked once more on two sides, simultaneously. *Kashimazan Maru*, carrying aviation gasoline was hit during this attack and exploded. About an hour later, another attack sank *Havre Maru*. Of the troops of the three troop transports . . . 80% were saved. . . .[27]

Eighty percent of the Japanese troops of this particular movement were saved but their heavy equipment including guns and ammunition were all lost.

As was reported by despatches from Saipan to Japanese Headquarters in Tokjo:

> The shipwrecked units are 3rd and 4th Independent Tank Companys, 14th and 17th Independent Mortar Battalions, 3 aviation units, etc., and have no use as fighting units; the infantry are without hats and shoes and are in confusion.[28]

And, while the Japanese rapidly built up the defenses of Saipan, there was much they didn't do. The Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas in his Operational Report on the defenses of Saipan, based on data determined after the occupation, wrote:

> Subsequent to the capture of Saipan, an inspection of its defenses was made by the Engineering Section of the Expeditionary Troops. Information was obtained from an important prisoner of war who had been the former Intelligence Officer of the Japanese 43rd Division and from captured documents. . . .
>
> The prepared defenses of Saipan were amazingly inadequate and incomplete. . . . Not a single battery position or fortification inspected was entirely complete. . . . In the Garapan Naval Depot, the following guns were found: 3 5″ coast defense guns, 1 140-mm coast defense gun, 32 120-mm dual purpose guns, 6 200-mm mortars. . . .
>
> Guns implaced ready to fire:

6″	120-mm	200-mm	Total
8	20	4	32

* * * * *

> It can be seen that only slightly more than one-third of the heavy coast defense and dual purpose guns that were available on the island had been completely mounted and made ready for firing.[29]

[27] USSBS Interrogation No. 225, p. 212.

[28] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Monthly Operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas, June 1944, Appendix 9, p. 5.

[29] *Ibid.*, Annex A, pp. 8–9.

JAPANESE DEFENSE DOCTRINE

The Japanese documents captured in previous amphibious operations had always stressed the Japanese island defense doctrine of "destroying the enemy at the beaches," or in other words during the most difficult period of the amphibious operations—the transition period from naval war to land war. It was widely anticipated that since the Marianas were quite different islands than those in the coral atolls, that the Japanese defensive pattern would change. But it didn't. A captured document on Saipan read:

> It is expected that the enemy will be destroyed on the beaches through a policy of tactical command based on aggressiveness, determination and initiative.[30]

THE JAPANESE FLEET AGAIN RETIRES WESTWARD

When Task Force 58 raided the Palau Islands at the end of March 1944, the Japanese Combined Fleet once again retreated westward, this time to Tawi Tawi Harbor in the Sulu Archipelago in the Southwest Philippines. It was operating in this area, 1,600 miles away from the Marianas, when the Joint Expeditionary Force moved in to assault the Marianas.

Worried about the defense of western New Guinea, a good sized detachment of the Combined Fleet was under orders early in June 1944 to support a Japanese amphibious assault to recapture Biak Island off northwestern New Guinea. Japanese land-based planes from the Marianas were ordered down south to Halmahera to support the operation. The Japanese task force for this assault, Operation KON, was actually well assembled at Batjan in the Moluccas (southwest of Halmahera, four hundred miles south of Mindanao) by 11 June.

Reports of the TF 58 raids on the Marianas late on that day raised doubts in the minds of the Japanese as to whether the Marianas were being raided or whether they were a United States amphibious assault objective. Upon receipt of news on 13 June that battleships were bombarding Saipan, the Japanese assault on Biak was cancelled by Admiral Toyoda, Commander in Chief Combined Fleet. He had succeeded to command the Combined Fleet upon the death in a plane accident of Admiral Koga.[31] The cancellation was the the first of many pleasant dividends from FORAGER.

[30] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Translation No. 8946, Defense Plan for Saipan Island, 6 Sep. 1944.
[31] USSBS Interrogations No. 32 and No. 47.

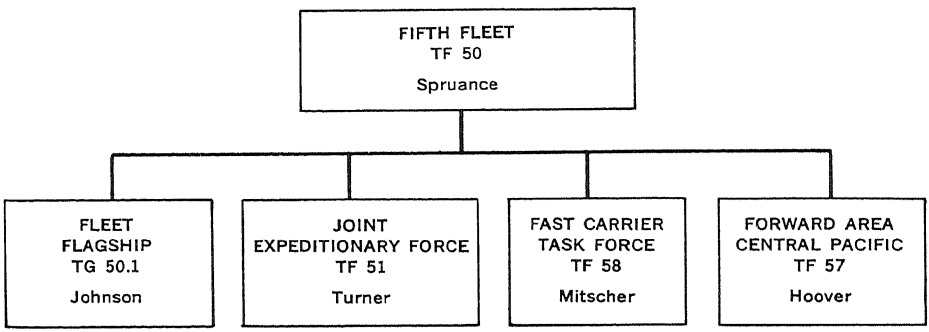
ORGANIZING FOR FORAGER

The tremendous size of the FORAGER Operation began to become a reality when the Commander Pacific Ocean Areas in his basic order directed:

> All major Commanders in the Pacific Ocean Areas will support this operation.[32]

To give further orientation on the titular nomenclature used in the Central Pacific it should be recorded that when Admiral Spruance was directed to conduct the wide-ranging FORAGER Operation it was as Commander Fifth Fleet rather than as Commander, Central Pacific Task Forces.

Task Force 50, the Fifth Fleet, was organized as follows:



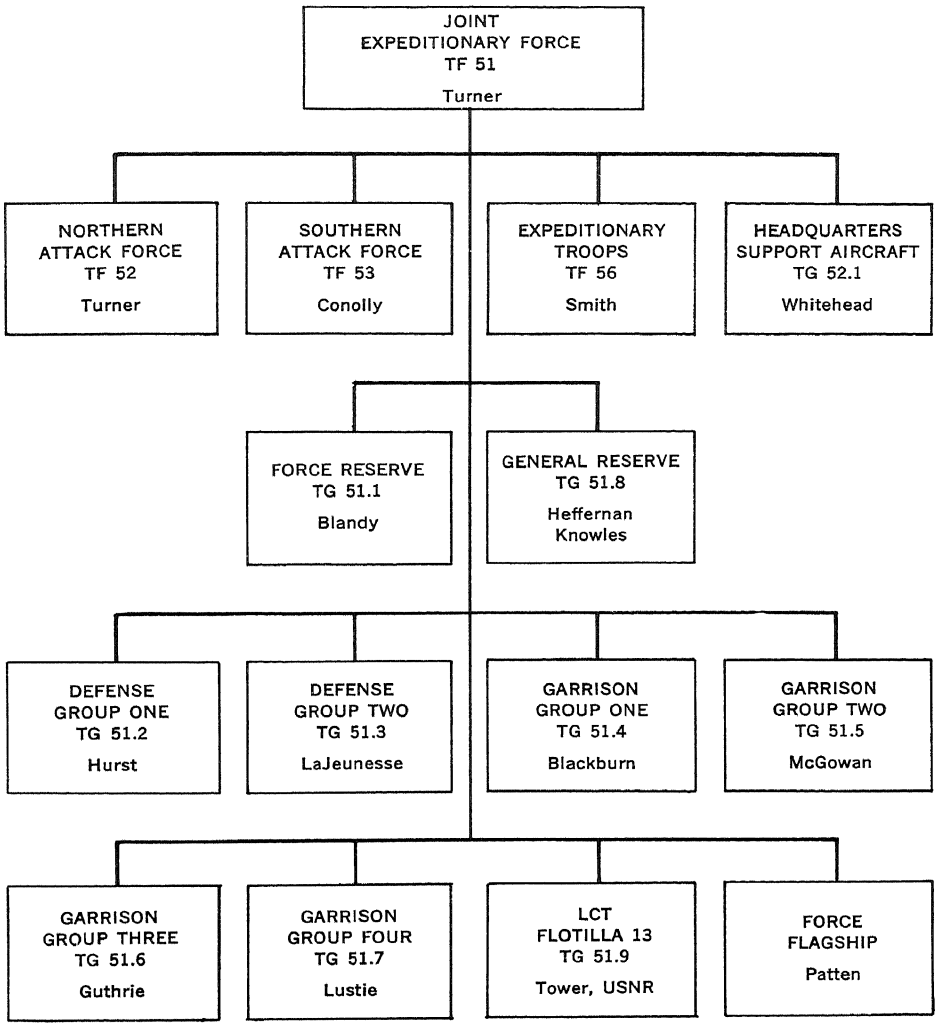
Vice Admiral Turner organized the Joint Expeditionary Force, TF 51, as shown on page 875.

The Expeditionary Troops included the two Landing Forces, each approximately the equivalent of a corps command, as well as the Expeditionary Troop Reserve and the Garrison Troops. Lieutenant General Smith retained command of the Northern Landing Force, but in this task used a staff separate from the one which functioned with him in the whole Expeditionary Troop command. Major General Roy S. Geiger, USMC, commanded the Southern Landing Force at Guam.

The two assault Landing Forces initially totaled 127,500 men, with 71,000 for Saipan and 56,500 for Guam.

Commander of the Saipan troops in the Expeditionary Reserve (CTG 56.3), the 27th Infantry Division, was Major General Ralph Smith, AUS. Major General Andrew D. Bruce, AUS (CTG 56.4), commanded the 77th

[32] (a) CINCPOA Op Plan 3–44, 23 Apr. 1944; (b) COMFIFTHFLT Op Plan CEN 10–44, 12 May 1944; (c) COMFIFTHPHIBFOR (CTF 51) Op Plan A10–44, 6 May 1944; (d) CTF 52 Op Plan A11–44, 21 May 1944.



Infantry Division, initially designated "In general area reserve" but planned to be used for the Guam landings.

As it turned out, the "general reserve" was embarked from Pearl Harbor in two echelons based on the availability of transports. Captain J. B. Heffernan (1917) embarked the first echelon, the 305 Regimental Combat Team from the 77th Division, in a division of transports on 2 July, and Captain H. B. Knowles (1917) embarked the second echelon, which was the remainder of the 77th Division in two divisions of transports on 9 July.

In the original plan it was estimated that the Joint Expeditionary Force

would complete its missions for FORAGER about Dog Day plus 40 (July 25th) and that the entire movement of garrison forces and equipment would be completed about Dog Day plus 80 (September 3rd).[33] The first estimate turned out to have been optimistic.

COMMAND DECENTRALIZATION

In the Saipan landings, Vice Admiral Turner took one more step away from the immediate control of all the details of the assault landing operations. At Kwajalein the actual landing of the Landing Force with its ten times a thousand details had been turned over to the Commander Transports. At Saipan there was an even greater divesture of detailed duty, with Rear Admiral Hill, the Second-in-Command, taking over a very large share of the duties of the Attack Force Commander.

Admiral Turner described the arrangement as follows:

> Although I had command of the entire Joint Expeditionary Force, I also exercised command of the Northern Attack Force, for the capture of Saipan. But I divided these duties, assigning to Admiral Hill all *naval* duties concerned with the landing of troops, and retaining in my own hands the gunfire and air control, all protective measures at the objective, and SOPA duties at Saipan. But for the Tinian attack, we formed a new Attack Force under Admiral Hill, and he exercised all naval duties for Tinian. However, I retained the SOPA and protective duties at Saipan.[34]

That this arrangement worked out to Vice Admiral Turner's satisfaction is indicated in the following extract from a personal letter written to an old subordinate and friend (Rear Admiral T. S. Wilkinson) two days before all organized resistance ceased on Tinian:

> I found here that I had my hands full running the SOPA job and the gunfire and aircraft, while Hill was fully engaged in landing and supplying the troops.[35]

Rear Admiral Hill stated in his FORAGER Report:

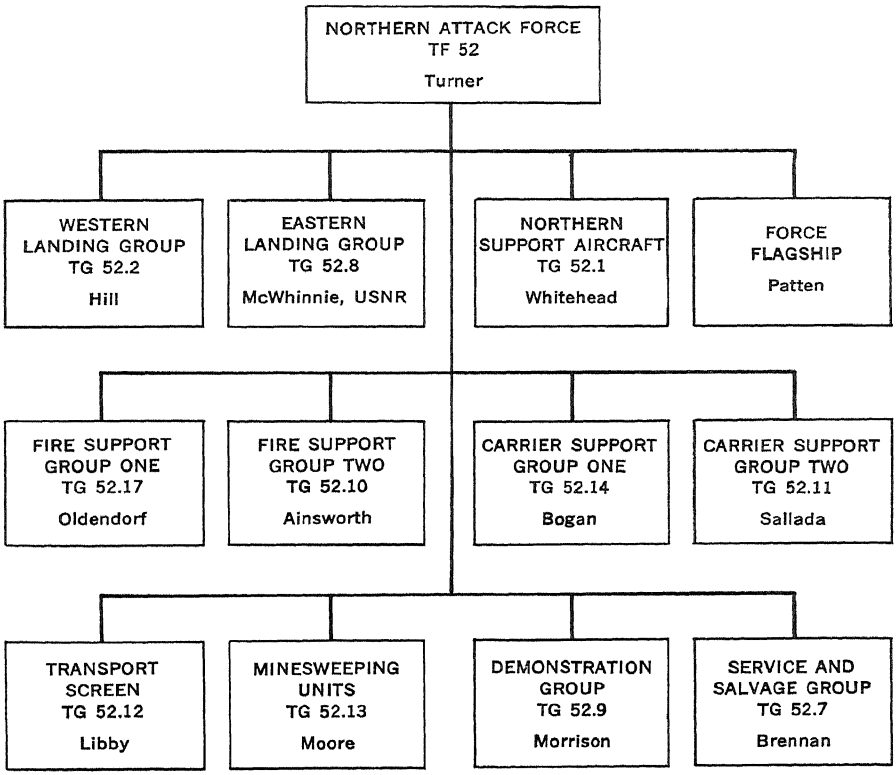
> This command relationship functioned satisfactorily. . . . However, gunfire and close air support are so intimately related to the operations of the ground troops that it is considered advisable in future operations to vest in

[33] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR (CTF 51) Op Plan A10–44, Annex A, para 5.
[34] Turner.
[35] RKT to TSW, letter, 30 Jul. 1944.

the naval commander responsible for the landing, the complete control of naval gunfire and close air support.[36]

No sale of this suggestion was made.

Vice Admiral Turner issued his Attack Order A11–44 for the Northern Attack Force on 21 May 1944. Its size and complexity tended to dwarf previous assault orders. It ran to 341 pages, which added to the 41 pages of CINCPAC's order, the 163 pages of Commander Fifth Fleet's order, and the 254 pages of Commander Joint Expeditionary Force's order, provided 800 pages of reading matter plus dozens of chart diagrams for the amphibians to peruse.



In organizing the Northern Attack Force, Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill was designated in the orders as Second-in-Command and assigned to command the Western Landing Group. Commodore Theiss, the Chief of Staff and the most amphibiously seasoned senior officer in the command, other than Vice Admiral Turner, was designated Commander Control Group, in

[36] CTG 52.2, Report of Saipan Operation, 23 Aug. 1944, p. 18.

an effort to avoid a recurrence of the boat control problems which had plagued the Northern Attack Force at Roi-Namur.

A Demonstration Group of nine transports and four cargo ships was organized from ships carrying the Division Reserves.

A good many of the amphibians who had carried through in the Marshalls were available, and a few amphibians, such as Captain Herbert B. Knowles, Captain Donald W. Loomis and Captain Henry C. Flanagan, dated back to the Gilberts, or New Georgia and even to Guadalcanal. However, the Bureau of Naval Personnel was sweeping most of the veterans ashore, and one had to fight the Bureau real long and hard to stay at sea and fight the war.

The Northern Attack Force was organized in Attack Order A11–44 of 21 May 1944 as shown on page 877.

THE NORTHERN ATTACK FORCE

The ships, landing craft and troop assignments to the Northern Attack Force (TF 52) were as follows:

NORTHERN ATTACK FORCE—TASK FORCE 52

Second-in-Command, Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill (1911)

(a) *FORCE FLAGSHIP*
AGC-3 *Rocky Mount* (FF) Captain S. F. Patten (1921)

(b) *TG 52.1 NORTHERN SUPPORT AIRCRAFT*—Captain R. F. Whitehead (1921)

(c) *TG 52.2 WESTERN LANDING GROUP*—Rear Admiral H. W. Hill (1911)

(1) *TF 56 NORTHERN LANDING FORCE*—Lieutenant General H. M. Smith, USMC

a. Corps Troops

b. Second Marine Division, plus attached units
Major General T. E. Watson, USMC

c. Fourth Marine Division, plus attached units
Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC

(2) *TG 52.3 TRANSPORT GROUP ABLE* Captain H. B. Knowles (1917)

a. *TU 52.3.1 TRANSPORT DIVISION TEN* Captain G. D. Morrison (1920)
APA-39 *Clay* (F) Captain E. W. Abdill (1924)
APA-9 *Neville* Captain Bradford Bartlett (1922)

APA-11 *Feland* Commander G. M. Jones, USNR
APA-25 *Arthur Middleton* Captain S. A. Olsen, USCG
AKA-9 *Alhena* Commander M. D. Sylvester (1925)
AK-43 *Jupiter* Lieutenant Commander T. H. Whitaker, USNR
AK-41 *Hercules* Commander W. H. Turnquist, USNR

b. *TU 53.3.2 TRANSPORT DIVISION EIGHTEEN* Captain H. B. Knowles (1917)
APA-31 *Monrovia* (F) Commander J. D. Kelsey (1923)
APA-36 *Cambria* (GF) Captain C. W. Dean, USCG
APA-89 *Frederick Funston* Commander C. C. Anderson (1920)
AP-168 *War Hawk* Commander S. H. Thompson, USNR
AKA-7 *Alcyone* Commander H. P. Knickerbocker (1921)
LSD-6 *Lindenwald* Commander W. H. Weaver, USNR

c. *TU 53.3.3 TRANSPORT DIVISION TWENTY-EIGHT* Captain H. C. Flanagan (1921)
APA-34 *Bolivar* (F) Commander R. P. Wadell (1923)
APA-1 *Doyen* Commander J. G. McClaughry (1927)
APA-51 *Sheridan* Commander J. J. Mockrish, USNR
AP-166 *Comet* Lieutenant Commander V. F. Stieglitz, USNR
AKA-4 *Electra* Commander C. S. Beightler (1920)
LSD-7 *Oak Hill* Commander C. A. Peterson (1929)

d. *TU 53.3.4 SECOND MARINE DIVISION LANDING FORCE* Major General T. E. Watson, USMC
Second Marine Division, plus attached units

(3) *TG 52.4 TRANSPORT GROUP BAKER,* Captain D. W. Loomis (1918)

a. *TU 52.4.1 TRANSPORT DIVISION TWENTY*—Captain D. W. Loomis
APA-12 *Leonard Wood* (F) Captain H. C. Perkins, USCG
APA-50 *Pierce* Captain F. M. Adams (1922)
APA-90 *James O'Hara* Commander E. W. Irish (1924)
AP-102 *La Salle* Commander F. C. Fluegel, USNR
AKA-19 *Thuban* Commander J. C. Campbell, USNR
LSD-1 *Ashland* Lieutenant Commander W. A. Caughey, USNR

b. *TU 52.4.2 TRANSPORT DIVISION TWENTY-SIX* Captain R. E. Hanson (1921)
APA-35 *Callaway* (F) Captain D. C. McNeil, USCG
APA-48 *Leon* Captain B. B. Adell (1922)
APA-52 *Sumter* Captain T. G. Haff (1920)

AP-171 *Storm King* Captain H. D. Krick (1923)
AKA-10 *Almaack* Lieutenant Commander C. O. Hicks, USNR
LSD-2 *Belle Grove* Commander M. Seavy, USNR
LSD-8 *Whitemarsh* Commander G. H. Eppleman, USNR

c. *TU 52.4.3 TRANSPORT DIVISION THIRTY*—Captain C. A. Misson (1921)
APA-46 *Knox* (F) Commander J. H. Brady (1923)
APA-7 *Fuller* Commander N. M. Pigman (1915)
APA-32 *Calvert* Commander E. J. Sweeney, USNR
AP-105 *George F. Elliott* Commander A. J. Couble (1920)
AP-167 *John Land* Commander F. A. Graf (1926)
AKA-3 *Bellatrix* Commander E. J. Anderson, USNR

d. *TU 52.4.4 FOURTH MARINE DIVISION LANDING FORCE*—Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC
Fourth Marine Division, plus attached units.

(4) *TG 52.5 TRACTOR FLOTILLA* Captain Armand J. Robertson, (1922)
PC(S)-1402 (Flotilla Flag) Lieutenant H. E. Taylor, USNR

a. *TU 52.5.1 TRACTOR GROUP ABLE* Captain J. S. Lillard (1924)
PC(S)-1403 (F) Lieutenant N. L. Barnes, Jr., USNR
TU 52.5.2 LST UNIT ONE Lieutenant Commander J. L. Harlan, USN
LST-451 (F) Lieutenant R. D. Flynn, USNR
LST-31 Lieutenant P. M. Owen, USNR
LST-130 Lieutenant J. E. Collins, USNR
*LST-179 Lieutenant W. F. Mulliss, USNR
**LST-213 Lieutenant G. Hoppock, USNR
LST-218 Lieutenant R. H. McCarthy, USNR
LST-242 Lieutenant J. W. Winney, USNR
**LST-268 Lieutenant R. C. Zink, USNR
LST-271 Lieutenant L. M. Murphy, USNR
*LST-353 Lieutenant (jg) Chester A. Martin, USN
TU 52.5.3 LST UNIT TWO Lieutenant Commander S. A. Lief, USNR
LST-484 (GF) Lieutenant (jg) F. Corby, Jr., USNR
*LST-29 Lieutenant W. B. Humkey, USNR
LST-34 Lieutenant J. J. Davis, USNR
LST-278 Lieutenant M. N. Black, USNR
LST-341 Lieutenant Seymour Epstein, USNR
LST-390 Lieutenant J. M. Edinburg, USNR
LST-450 Lieutenant C. G. Drasher, USNR
**LST-461 Lieutenant C. P. Geis, USNR
LST-485 Lieutenant H. F. Breimyer, USNR

TU 52.5.4 LST RESERVE ABLE Lieutenant E. C. Shea, USNR
LST-486 (F) Lieutenant E. C. Shea, USNR
***LST-71 Lieutenant Commander F. E. Miner, USCGR
LST-120 Lieutenant J. F. Conlan, Jr., USNR
**LST-127 Lieutenant J. J. Reed, USNR
LST-131 Lieutenant J. M. Tully, USNR
LST-166 Lieutenant F. B. Bradley, USCGR
LST-246 Lieutenant N. D. Taylor, USNR
b. *TU 52.5.5 TRACTOR GROUP BAKER* Captain Armand J. Robertson (1922)
TU 52.2.6 LST UNIT THREE Commander W. S. Whiteside (1926)
LST-226 (F) Lieutenant T. A. Perkins, USNR
**LST-19 Lieutenant Commander C. M. Blackford, USCGR
*LST-39 Lieutenant R. J. Figaro, USN
LST-42 Lieutenant R. L. Guy, USN
*LST-43 Lieutenant W. H. Zuehlke, USNR
LST-45 Lieutenant G. C. Gamble, USNR
*LST-69 Lieutenant R. T. Leary, USNR
**LST-84 Lieutenant E. H. Thiele, USNR
LST-126 Lieutenant H. C. Krueger, USNR
**LST-223 Lieutenant T. S. Moulton, USNR
LST-273 Lieutenant J. F. James, USNR
TU 52.2.7 LST UNIT FOUR Lieutenant Commander J. B. Hoyt, USNR
LST-225 (F) Lieutenant L. J. Goddard, USNR
**LST-128 Lieutenant H. T. Walden, Jr., USNR
LST-129 Lieutenant M. J. Prince, USNR
LST-222 Lieutenant A. Thompson, USNR
LST-224 Lieutenant C. M. Pugh, USN
***LST-244 Lieutenant L. W. Aderhold, USNR
LST-267 Lieutenant E. O. Sprung, USNR
***LST-274 Lieutenant R. E. Sard, USNR
LST-275 Lieutenant J. P. Dunlavey, USNR
**LST-487 Lieutenant Jesse E. Gose, USN
TU 52.2.8 LST RESERVE BAKER—Commander Roy W. Lajeunesse (1924)
LST-354(F) Lieutenant W. A. Henry, USN
LST-23 Lieutenant G. A. Martin, USNR
LST-121 Lieutenant J. P. Devaney, USNR
LST-340 Lieutenant L. Haskell, USNR
c. *TU 52.5.9 SUPPORT ARTILLERY GROUP* Lieutenant-Commander John F. Dore, USNR
LST-272(F) Lieutenant Commander J. F. Dore, USNR

LST-40 Lieutenant W. H. Farmer, USN
LST-124 Lieutenant W. A. Bartos, USN
LST-169 Lieutenant R. L. Kittredge, USCGR
***LST-205 Lieutenant R. J. Buchar, USCG
LST-240 Lieutenant K. P. Wells, USNR
**LST-277 Lieutenant E. B. Watson, USNR
*LST-480 Lieutenant W. H. Johnson, USN
**LST-483 Lieutenant D. T. Kimbrough, Jr., USNR
27th Division and Corps Artillery

(5) *TG 52.6 CONTROL GROUP* Commodore Paul Theiss (1912)

a. *TU 52.6.1 CENTRAL CONTROL UNIT* Commodore Theiss
PC(S)-1452 (F) Lieutenant (jg) W. B. Norwood, USNR
PC(S)-1421 Lieutenant (jg) E. T. Freeman, USNR
SC-1049 Lieutenant (jg) E. T. Chamberlain, Jr., USNR
SC-1052 Lieutenant Arthur Phillips, Jr., USNR
SC-1320 Lieutenant T. P. Ulmer, USNR
LCI-82 Lieutenant (jg) L. W. Bolon, USNR
LCI-371 Lieutenant E. W. Gooding, USNR
LCC-25491

b. *TU 52.6.2 CONTROL GROUP ABLE* Lieutenant Raymond J. Koshliek (1940)
PC-1079 Lieutenant J. Davis Allen, Jr., USNR
PC-1080 Lieutenant A. G. Steer, Jr., USNR
PC(S)-1461 Lieutenant W. S. Harrison, USNR
LCC-21422, 21437, 25472, 39054

c. *TU 52.6.3 CONTROL GROUP BAKER*
PC-581 Lieutenant R. R. Worthington, USNR
PC-582 Lieutenant R. T. Sinnott, USNR
PC(S)-1455 Lieutenant Dennis Mann, USNR
LCC-21432, 25471, 25473, 39046

d. *TU 52.6.4 DEMONSTRATION CONTROL UNIT* Lieutenant B. A. Looney, USNR
SC-999 Lieutenant (jg) L. A. Schammel, USNR
SC-1066 Lieutenant (jg) B. M. Hollander, USNR
LCCs-25485, 25486

(6) *TU 52.6.5 GUNBOAT SUPPORT GROUP* Commander M. J. Malanaphy (1922)

a. *GUNBOAT SUPPORT UNIT ABLE* Lieutenant-Commander Robert Eikel, USNR
LCI-456 (GF) Lieutenant W. M. Wilson, USNR
LCI-451 (F) Lieutenant (jg) F. R. Giliberty, USNR

LCI-452 Lieutenant (jg) R. J. Van Dragt, USNR
LCI-453 Lieutenant (jg) J. H. Terry, USNR
LCI-455 Lieutenant (jg) W. T. Harrison, USN
LCI-458 Ensign F. W. Cole, USNR
LCI-459 Lieutenant (jg) J. R. Rawn, USNR
LCI-460 Lieutenant (jg) H. H. Butzon, USNR
LCI-461 Lieutenant (jg) R. F. Godbout, USNR
LCI-462 Ensign D. G. Griggs, USNR
LCI-463 Lieutenant (jg) A. C. Byrd, USNR
LCI-470 Lieutenant (jg) P. J. Shaver, Jr., USNR

b. *TU 52.6.7 GUNBOAT SUPPORT UNIT BAKER* Lieutenant-Commander J. F. McFadden (1935)
LCI-373 (GF) Lieutenant M. R. Harkavy, USNR
LCI-77(F) Lieutenant (jg) R. E. Miles, USNR
LCI-78 Lieutenant (jg) V. C. Kester, USNR
LCI-79 Lieutenant (jg) C. L. Fergus, USNR
LCI-80 Lieutenant (jg) T. J. Nally, USNR
LCI-81 Lieutenant H. W. Schloss, USNR
LCI-347 Lieutenant (jg) John J. P. Ryan, USNR
LCI-372 Lieutenant (jg) W. P. Henricks, USNR
LCI-454 Lieutenant (jg) J. P. Marzano, USNR
LCI-725 Lieutenant (jg) R. A. Gustafson, USNR
LCI-726 Lieutenant (jg) P. R. Kohout, USNR

(7) *TU 52.6.9 BEACH DEMOLITION GROUP* Commander J. S. Horner, USNR
APD-11 *Gilmer* (F) Commander J. S. Horner, USNR
APD-10 *Brooks* Lieutenant Commander C. V. Allen, USNR
APD-31 *Clemson* Lieutenant W. F. Moran, USNR

a. *UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAMS* Lieutenant Commander Draper L. Kauffman, USNR (1933)
(1) Underwater Demolition Team #5
Lieutenant Commander Kauffman, USNR
(2) Underwater Demolition Team #6
Lieutenant Commander DeEarle M. Logsdon, USNR
(3) Underwater Demolition Team #7
Lieutenant Richard F. Burke, USNR

(8) *TU 52.6.10 BEACHMASTERS GROUP* Commander Carl E. Anderson, USNR

a. SC-1012 Lieutenant W. C. Coughenour, Jr., USNR
b. *TU 52.6.11 CENTRAL BEACHMASTERS UNIT* Commander Anderson
c. *TU 52.6.12 BEACHMASTERS UNIT ABLE* Lieutenant-Commander F. E. Adams, USNR

d. *TU 52.6.13 BEACHMASTERS UNIT BAKER* Lieutenant S. C. Boardman, USNR

(9) *TU 52.6.14 LCT FLOTILLA THIRTEEN* Lieutenant Commander L. L. Tower, USNR

a. *TU 52.6.15 LCT GROUP THIRTY-SEVEN* Lieutenant A. J. Cross, USNR

12 LCT

Division 73 LCTs-160, -356, -967, -993, -994, -996

Division 74 LCTs-258, -357, -985, -986, -987, -1060

b. *TU 52.6.16 LCT GROUP THIRTY-EIGHT* Lieutenant K. R. A. Gross, USNR

13 LCT

Division 75 LCTs-348, -349, -962, -966, -989, -1061, 1062

Division 76 LCTs-964, -965, -968, -982, -995, -1059

c. *TU 52.6.17 LCT GROUP THIRTY-NINE* Lieutenant F. D. Kaser, USNR

11 LCT

Division 77 LCTs-355, -394, -997, -998, -1057, -1058

Division 78 LCTs-354, -358, -991,*** -1000, -1001

(10) *TU 52.6.18 PONTOON BARGE UNIT* Commander Carl E. Anderson, USNR

24 Pontoon Barges

(d) *TG 52.7 SERVICE AND SALVAGE GROUP* Captain Leo Brennan, USNR

AKN-4 *Keoknk* (F) Lieutenant Commander J. L. McLean, USNR

ATF-92 *Tawasa* Lieutenant R. K. Thurman, USNR

ATF-93 *Tekesta* Lieutenant Commander J. O. Strickland, USN

ATF-106 *Molala* Lieutenant R. L. Ward, USN

ARS-8 *Preserver* Lieutenant Commander A. T. Ostrander, USNR (Retired)

AN-12 *Chichona* Lieutenant T. A. Ingham, USNR

AN-26 *Mimosa* Lieutenant W. M. Hupfel, USNR

ARB-3 *Phaon* Lieutenant G. F. Watson, USNR

AVD-10 *Ballard* Lieutenant G. C. Nichandrous, USNR

(e) *TG 52.8 EASTERN LANDING GROUP* Commander C. J. McWhinnie, USNR (1928)

TU 52.8.1 TRANSPORT DIVISION TWELVE Commander McWhinnie, USNR

APD-8 *Waters* (F) Commander C. J. McWhinnie, USNR

APD-1 *Manley* Lieutenant R. T. Newell, Jr., USNR

APD-16 *Stringham* Lieutenant Commander R. H. Mourcau, USNR

APD-23 *Overton* Lieutenant Commander D. K. O'Connor, USNR

APD-24 *Noa* Lieutenant H. W. Boud, USNR

APD-32 *Goldsborough* Lieutenant W. J. Meehan, USNR

TU 52.8.2 EASTERN LANDING FORCE Lieutenant Colonel W. B. Kyle, USMC

First Battalion, Second Marines, plus attached units.

(f) *TG 52.9 DEMONSTRATION GROUP* Captain G. D. Morrison (1920)

TU 52.9.1 Transport Division Ten

TU 52.9.2 Transport Division Thirty

(As listed previously under Transport Groups Able and Baker)

(g) *TG 52.17 FIRE SUPPORT GROUP ONE* Rear Admiral J. B. Oldendorf (1909)

Unit One Rear Admiral H. F. Kingman (1911)

BB-43 *Tennessee* Captain A. D. Mayer (1916)

BB-44 *California* Captain H. P. Burnett (1915)

CA-35 *Indianapolis* Captain E. R. Johnson (1918)

CL-62 *Birmingham* Captain T. B. Inglis (1918)

DD-688 *Remey* (Desron 54, Captain J. G. Coward on board) (1922) Commander R. P. Fiala (1931)

DD-689 *Wadleigh* Commander W. C. Winn (1927)

DD-690 *Norman Scott* Commander S. D. Owens (1931)

DD-691 *Mertz* Commander W. S. Estabrook (1930)

Unit Two Commander P. H. Fitzgerald (1925)

DD-562 *Robinson* Commander E. B. Grantham (1930)

DD-492 *Bailey* Commander M. T. Munger (1932)

DD-649 *Albert W. Grant* Commander T. A. Nisewaner (1932)

Unit Three Captain H. B. Jarrett (1922)

DD-686 *Halsey Powell* Commander W. T. McGarry (1927)

DD-606 *Coghlan* Lieutenant Commander B. B. Cheatham (1933)

DD-798 *Monssen* Commander B. A. Fuetsch (1930)

Unit Four Rear Admiral Oldendorf (1909)

CA-28 *Louisville* Captain S. H. Hurt (1918)

BB-46 *Maryland* (Rear Admiral T. D. Ruddock (1914) on board) Captain H. J. Ray (1914)

DD-45 *Colorado* Captain W. Granat (1915)

DD-677 *McDermut* (Commander D. C. Varian (1925) on board) Lieutenant Commander C. B. Jennings (1935)

DD-678 *McGowan* Commander W. R. Cox (1932)

DD-679 *McNair* Commander M. L. McCullough (1930)

DD-680 *Melvin* Commander W. R. Edsall (1927)

Unit Five Rear Admiral R. W. Hayler (1914)

CL-57 *Montpelier* Captain H. D. Hoffman (1918)

CL-55 *Cleveland* Captain A. G. Shepard (1917)

DD-541 *Yarnall* Commander B. F. Tompkins (1926)

DD-540 *Twining* Commander E. K. Wakefield (1930)
DD-683 *Stockham* Commander E. P. Holmes (1930)

(h) *TG 52.10 FIRE SUPPORT GROUP TWO* Rear Admiral W. L. Ainsworth (1910)

Unit Six Rear Admiral Ainsworth
CL-48 *Honolulu* Captain H. R. Thurber (1919)
BB-38 *Pennsylvania* Captain C. F. Martin (1914)
BB-42 *Idaho* Captain H. D. Clarke (1915)
DD-515 *Anthony* (Commander E. B. Taylor on board) (1925) Commander B. Van Mater (1927)
DD-516 *Wadsworth* Commander J. F. Walsh (1926)
DD-475 *Hudson* Lieutenant Commander R. R. Pratt (1936)
APD-21 *Dickerson* Lieutenant Commander J. R. Cain, USNR
DD-244 *Williamson* Lieutenant Commander J. A. Pridmore (1937)
DMS-6 *Hogan* Lieutenant Commander W. H. Sublette (1934)

Unit Seven Rear Admiral G. L. Weyler (1909)
BB-40 *New Mexico* Captain E. M. Zacharias (1912)
CA-36 *Minneapolis* Captain Harry Slocum (1919)
CA-38 *San Francisco* Captain H. E. Overesch (1915)
DD-480 *Halford* Lieutenant Commander R. J. Hardy (1934)
DD-513 *Terry* Lieutenant Commander J. M. Lee (1935)
DD-630 *Braine* Commander W. W. Fitts (1931)
APD-7 *Talbot* Lieutenant Commander C. C. Morgan, USNR
DMS-8 *Stansbury* Lieutenant Commander D. M. Granstrom, USNR

Unit Eight Rear Admiral C. T. Joy (1916)
CA-45 *Wichita* Captain J. J. Mahoney (1915)
CA-32 *New Orleans* Captain J. E. Hurff (1920)
CL-40 *St. Louis* Captain R. H. Roberts (1919)
DD-474 *Fullam* Commander W. D. Kelly (1932)
DD-472 *Guest* Commander M. G. Kennedy (1929)
DD-473 *Bennett* Lieutenant Commander P. F. Hauck (1935)

(i) *TG 52.14 CARRIER SUPPORT GROUP ONE* Rear Admiral G. F. Bogan (1916)

Unit One Rear Admiral Bogan
CVE-70 *Fanshaw Bay* Captain D. P. Johnson (1920) with Composite Squadron 68: 16 FM-2 (Wildcat), 12 TBM-1C (Avenger), Lieutenant Commander R. S. Rogers (1938)
CVE-63 *Midway* Captain F. J. McKenna (1921) with Composite Squadron 65: 12 FM-2, 9 TBM-1C, Lieutenant Commander R. M. Jones, USNR
DD-793 *Cassin Young* Commander E. T. Schreiber (1929)
DD-794 *Irwin* Commander D. B. Miller (1926)
DD-563 *Ross* Commander Benjamin Coe (1929)

Unit Two Captain O. A. Weller (1920)
CVE-66 *White Plains* Captain Weller with Composite Squadron 4: 16 FM-2, 3 TBF-1C, 9 TBM-1C, Lieutenant Commander R. C. Evins (1939)
CVE-68 *Kalinin Bay* Captain C. R. Brown (1921) with Composite Squadron 3: 14 FM-2, 9 TBM-1C, Lieutenant Commander W. H. Keighley, USNR
DD-682 *Porterfield* Commander J. C. Woelfel (1927)
DD-792 *Callaghan* Commander F. J. Johnson (1929)
DD-559 *Longshaw* Commander R. H. Speck (1927)

(j) *TG 52.11 CARRIER SUPPORT GROUP TWO* Rear Admiral H. B. Sallada (1917)
Unit Three Rear Admiral Sallada
CVE-71 *Kitkun Bay* Captain J. P. Whitney (1922) with Composite Squadron 5: 12 FM-2, 8 TBM-1C, Lieutenant Commander R. L. Fowler (1936)
CVE-73 *Gambier Bay* Captain H. H. Goodwin (1922) with Composite Squadron 10: 16 FM-2, 12 TBM-1C, Lieutenant Commander E. J. Huxtable (1936)
DD-558 *Laws* Commander L. O. Wood (1931)
DD-560 *Morrison* Commander W. H. Price (1927)
DD-796 *Benham* Commander F. S. Keeler (1929)
Unit Four Rear Admiral F. B. Stump (1917)
CVE-74 *Nehenta Bay* Captain H. B. Butterfield (1922) with Composite Squadron 11: 12 FM-2, 9 TBM-1C, Lieutenant Commander O. B. Stanley (1939)
DD-660 *Bullard* (Commander C. E. Carroll on board (1924), Commander B. W. Freund (1932)
DD-661 *Kidd* Commander A. B. Roby (1930)
DD-667 *Chauncey* Lieutenant Commander L. C. Conwell (1933)

(k) *TG 52.12 TRANSPORT SCREEN* Captain R. E. Libby (1922)
DD-586 *Newcomb* Commander L. B. Cook (1931)
DD-662 *Bennion* Commander J. W. Cooper (1927)
DD-663 *Heyward L. Edwards* Commander J. W. Boulware (1927)
DD-665 *Bryant* Commander P. L. High (1927)
DD-360 *Phelps* Lieutenant Commander D. L. Martineau (1933)
DD-373 *Shaw* Commander R. H. Phillips (1927)
DD-561 *Prichett* Commander C. T. Caufield (1927)
DD-498 *Philip* Lieutenant Commander J. B. Rutter (1936)
DD-508 *Cony* Commander A. W. Moore (1934)

DD-389 *Mugford* Lieutenant Commander M. A. Shellabarger (1933)
DD-357 *Selfridge* Lieutenant Commander L. L. Snider (1938)
DD-371 *Conyngham* Lieutenant Commander Brown Taylor (1934)
DD-392 *Patterson* Lieutenant Commander A. F. White (1929)
DD-386 *Bagley* Lieutenant Commander W. H. Shea (1936)
DD-499 *Renshaw* Commander J. A. Lark (1932)
APD-18 *Kane* Lieutenant F. M. Christiansen, USNR
SC-1396
SC-1404
SC-1457
SC-1460

(1) *TG 12.13 MINESWEEPING AND HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY GROUP* Commander R. S. Moore, USNR

Unit One Commander W. R. Loud (1927)
DMS-13 *Hopkins* Lieutenant A. L. C. Waldron (1939)
DMS-17 *Perry* Lieutenant Commander I. G. Stubbart (1938)
DMS-12 *Long* Lieutenant Commander R. V. Wheeler (1937)
DMS-18 *Hamilton* Commander R. R. Sampson (1931)

Unit Two Lieutenant Commander H. L. Thompson (1934)
DMS-9 *Chandler* Lieutenant Commander H. L. Thompson
DMS-14 *Zane* Lieutenant Commander W. T. Powell (1935)
DMS-5 *Palmer* Lieutenant W. E. McGuirk, USNR
DMS-7 *Howard* Lieutenant O. F. Salvia (1939)

Unit Three Commander Moore
MSF-315 *Chief* Lieutenant Commander J. M. Wyckoff, USNR
MSF-314 *Champion* Lieutenant Commander J. H. Howard. USNR
AM-101 *Herald* Lieutenant E. P. Dietrich, USNR

Unit Four Lieutenant Commander J. R. Fels, USNR
AM-103 *Oracle* Lieutenant Commander Fels
AM-102 *Motive* Lieutenant Commander G. W. Lundgren, USNR
AM-100 *Heed* Lieutenant Magruder Dent, USNR

Units Five and Six and Mobile Hydrographic Unit:
5 YMS
2 LCC
6 LCV

Note (1) * LST destroyed by fire and explosions in fire at Pearl on 21 May 1944.
** Replacement LST
*** Did not actually participate in amphibious assault.

Note (2) Commanding Officers as of 1 July 1944, except for LSTs destroyed which are as of 21 May 1944. There were changes in command during the campaign.

Note (3) Names of Officers in Charge of LCTs have not been located.

SCHEME OF MANEUVER

The Scheme of Maneuver for FORAGER called for landing first on Saipan on 15 June 1944 with two divisions of troops, the Second and Fourth Marines. They were to land abreast over the western reef on beaches adjacent to the sugar refinery village of Charan Kanoa and on both sides of Afetna Point. They were to strike across the island, expanding the attack to the south, and overrun Aslito airfield in the southern part of the island.

A major innovation was that early on 15 June the transports carrying the Division Reserve were to make a feint of landing troops at beaches north of Tanapag Harbor, and about four miles to the north of the actual landing beaches at Charan Kanoa, in the hope of deceiving the Japanese regarding the primary point of attack and thus to immobilize temporarily their reserves believed to be in the area around Tanapag Harbor. The transports of the Demonstration Group were ordered to lower their landing craft from the davit heads, to simulate debarkation of troops and to make smoke and maneuver as necessary. The transports were to remain outside of the effective range of enemy shore batteries but the largely empty landing craft were to make a run into within 6,000 yards of the beach.

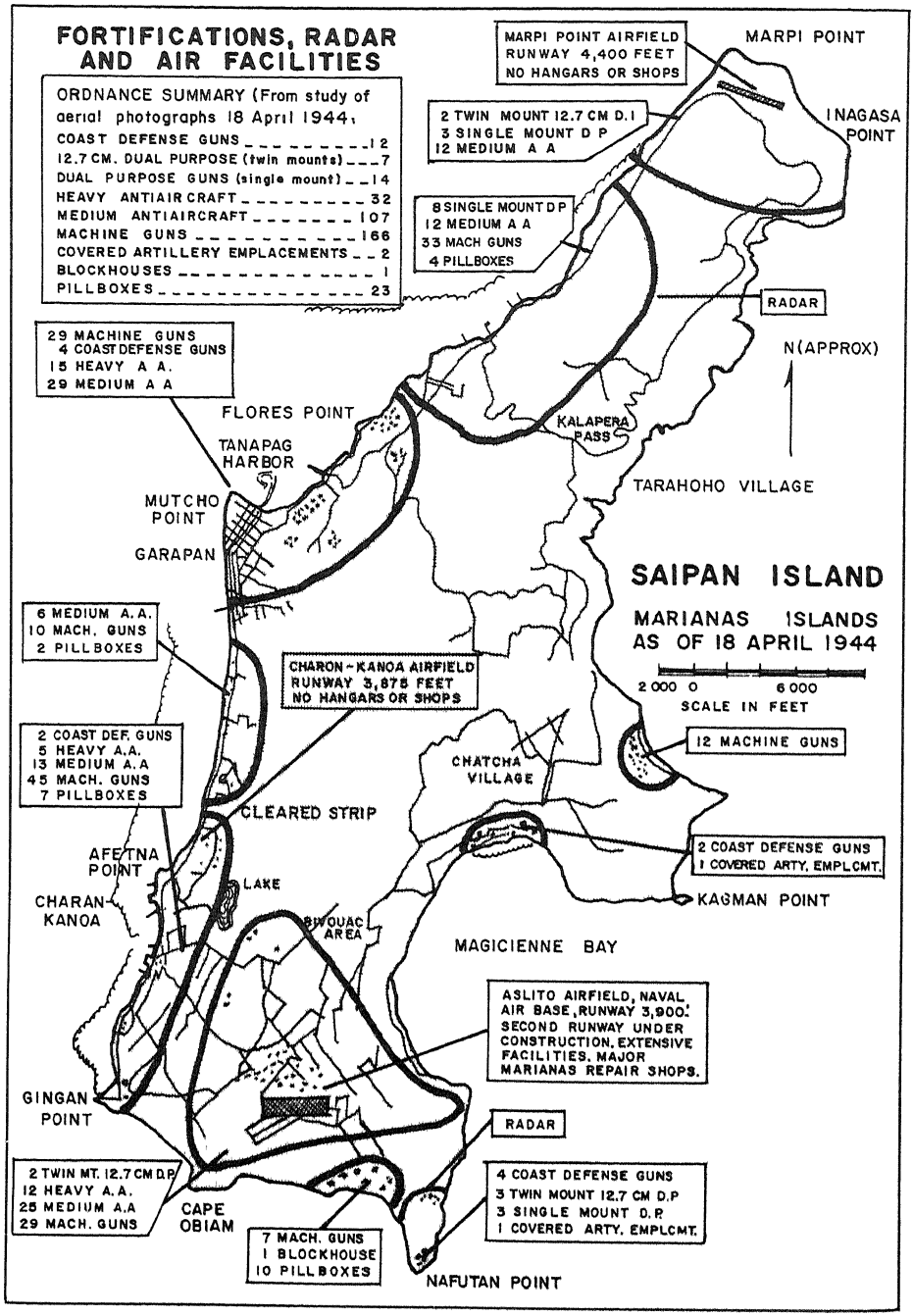
After the capture of Saipan had been completed, the troops who had accomplished this task were to be reorganized and then capture Tinian. The landing places on Tinian and the exact units to conduct the assault were to be determined later, but it was hoped to land about 5 July 1944.

The landing on Guam tentatively, and hopefully, set for 18 June, was to be accomplished by two simultaneous assault landings. The Third Marine Division was to land over the reef at Asan Village west of Agana. The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was to land over the reef in Agat Bay south of Orote Peninsula.

The Marines were to hold on the left and expand to the front and right. The 1st Provisional Marines were to hold on the right and expand to the left, capture Orote Peninsula and then join up with the Third Marines.

After the Third Marines and the 1st Provisional Brigade had joined forces, the Scheme of Maneuver called for holding on the south and moving east across Guam to cut the Japanese defense forces in two.

Due to the long, long delay before the assault on Guam could be launched, there was time to bring the 77th Infantry Division from General Reserve in Hawaii to the combat zone. The modified Scheme of Maneuver for Guam, developed after it was known that the 77th would be immediately available



Fortifications, radar, and air facilities on Saipan.

for the assault landing, called for one regiment of the 77th Infantry to be the Brigade Reserve, and the other two regiments to be the Corps Reserve, and for both to prepare for landings at Agat.

Commodore L. F. Reifsnider, who had fought through the Guadalcanal and New Georgia campaigns, was designated the Second-in-Command to Rear Admiral Conolly (CTF-53), who had the assault chore at Guam. Well before the landing operation was underway, the Commodore received his promotion to Rear Admiral.

Alternate plans were drawn up by the Northern Attack Force for landing at Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, in case surf or other conditions were not suitable for landing at Charan—Kanoa.

Arrangements were also made to transfer the troops making up the early assault waves at Saipan to LSTs at Eniwetok, so that these troops would not have to undergo a time consuming transfer period off the landing beaches, and they would not have to exist in vastly overcrowded LSTs for more than four or five days. Similar arrangements using further away Kwajalein as a staging point were made for assault forces against Guam.

The gunfire support ships and the jeep support carriers were divided about equally between the two attack forces, with the Guam contingent directed to assist in the Saipan attack with limited ammunition and bomb expenditures. The Saipan gun and air support contingents were due to repay the favor later, having been resupplied by mobile logistic support forces in the meantime.

The Southern Attack Force was to arrive about 80 miles east of Guam at 1700 June 16th, so as to be able to initiate minesweeping, underwater demolition, and last minute photo reconnaissance should it be practicable to carry out the June 18th assault.

FORAGER VERSUS FLINTLOCK

A comparison is given below of the ships and landing craft assigned by Commander Central Pacific Task Forces to the Joint Expeditionary Force for FLINTLOCK and for FORAGER. Numerous changes of individual ships took place during the period between assignment and the sailing date, but only very minor changes in the type total.[37]

[37] (a) CINCPAC Op Plan CEN 3–44 (FORAGER); (b) COMFIFTHFLT Op Plan CEN 1–44 (FLINTLOCK); (c) COMFIFTHFLT Op Plan CEN 10–44 (FORAGER); (d) CTF 51, FLINTLOCK Report, 25 Feb. 1944; FORAGER Report, 25 Aug. 1944.

	FLINTLOCK (278)* January 1944	FORAGER (535)** June 1944
Command Ships	2	2
Battleships (OBB)	7	7
Cruisers, Heavy	6	6
Cruisers, Light	3	5
Carriers (CVE)	8	11
Destroyers	51	86
Destroyer Escorts (DE)	10	16
Minesweepers, Fast (DMS)	8	10
Minesweepers (AM)	8	10
Minesweepers, Motor (YMS)	8	24
Attack Transports (APA)	28	43
Attack Cargo Ships (AKA)	7	13
Transports, Fast (APD)	4	13
Transports (AP)	7	17
Cargo Ships (AK)	4	10
Merchant Transports (XAP)	4	9
Merchant Cargo Ships (XAK)	9	12
Landing Ships Dock (LSD)	5	8
Landing Ship (Tank) (LST)	47	91
Landing Craft (Infantry)	24	50
Landing Craft (Tank) (LCT)	12	36
Auxiliary, Transport, Hospital (APH)	0	1
Auxiliary, Coastal Transport (APC)	0	1
Auxiliary, Repair Ship Large (ARL)	0	2
Auxiliary, Repair Ship Small (ARS)	0	2
Auxiliary, Repair Ship Battle Damage (ARB)	0	1
Auxiliary, Net Cargo Ship (AKN)	0	1
Auxiliary, Net Layer (AN)	0	4
Auxiliary, Seaplane Tender Destroyer-Type (AVD)	0	2
Patrol Craft (PC)	0	10
Submarine Chasers (SC)	10	16
Tugs	6	6

* 84,415 troops including 26,900 Army and 26,500 Marines in the assault forces.

** 166,000 troops including 128,000 in the assault forces of which 71,000 were in the assault forces at Saipan.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsal of the Northern Attack Force was held 15–19 May 1944 at Maalaea Bay, Maui and at Kahoolawe Island in Hawaiian Waters. This re-

hearsal was the biggest and longest held to date in the Pacific campaigns. Several mishaps during the rehearsal and post-rehearsal period left their mark on the amphibious forces.

On the suggestion of Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill, each of three LCTs was equipped as a gunboat with six 4.2-inch Coast Guard mortars and 2,500 rounds of projectiles. These were desired primarily to protect the left flank of our Landing Force against Japanese reserves moving down the coastal road from Garapan. By having the LCTs steam parallel to the beaches, they would also be able to cover the landing beaches with a blanket of heavy mortar fire while the assault waves were being formed.

During heavy weather enroute to the rehearsal area the night of 14–15 May, two of the three specially equipped LCTs carried away their securing gear from the LSTs on which they were mounted and riding and slid into Davy Jones Locker with considerable loss of life.[38]

The first day rehearsal was further marred by the non-arrival of one LST Group due to the very rough weather. The *Colorado* grounded on an uncharted pinnacle. All days of the rehearsal were marred by relatively rough water. All of these and more led Admiral Hill to call the rehearsals "as a whole very ragged and poorly conducted." However, a more junior participant thought that

> the rehearsal period in the Hawaiian area proved to be immensely beneficial in providing much needed supervised drill for Commanding Officers of LSTs in the expeditious launch of tractors at the right time and right place.[39]

In other words, the rehearsal served its essential purpose.

BEFORE SAILING, A LOGISTIC DISASTER

For the FORAGER Operation, 47 LSTs were assigned to the Northern Attack Force by Commander Joint Expeditionary Force. After they had participated in the big rehearsal held between 14 and 20 May, they returned to the Pearl Harbor Naval Base and were nested in West Loch near the Naval Ammunition Depot for final preparations before sailing on the campaign.

At this time there were only six ammunition ships available to the whole

[38] (a) CTF 52 Training Order A12–44, 8 May 1944; (b) CTF 52 Training Movement Order A13–44, 7 May 1944; (c) CTG 52.2 Action Report, 23 Aug. 1944; (d) CTF 51 FORAGER Report, 25 Aug. 1944; (e) Interview with Admiral Hill, 1 Feb. 1967. Hereafter Hill .

[39] (a) Hill; (b) COMLSTFLOT 13 Action Report, 11 Jul. 1944, p. 3.

Pacific Ocean Area. Because of this lack, 16 LSTs had been designated to each carry 750 rounds of 5-inch 38-caliber anti-aircraft shells and the powder for them. Ten more LSTs were designated each to carry 270 4.5-inch rockets, 6,000 rounds of 40-millimeter and 15,000 rounds of 20-millimeter machine gun ammunition.

So the nested LSTs were tinder box inflammable, since gasoline in drums covered much of their topsides, not already occupied by vehicles, and they had much ammunition stowed outside of their magazines.

Because of the loss of the two of the "LCT gunboats," Vice Admiral Turner made the decision to abandon this project. A natural corollary of that decision was to unload the 4.2 mortar ammunition out of the remaining "LCT gunboat." The unloading detail was disaster-bound.

One or more 4.2-inch high explosive mortar shells being offloaded by Army personnel into an Army truck on the elevator on the forecastle of the LST-353 exploded about 1508 on 21 May 1944. Those who saw the explosion from close aboard died. The immediate follow-up explosion was severe enough to cause a rain of fragments on all eight LSTs in the LST nest, and to start serious gasoline fires on three of these LSTs. A second large explosion at 1511 in the forward part of one of these three LSTs rained burning fragments on nearly all LSTs berthed not only in the nest but in the West Loch area. This led to a further large explosion at 1522 and the rapid burning, wrecking and loss of six LSTs and the three LCTs carried aboard three of the LSTs.

General Hogaboom, during his interview with this scribe, remembered that:

> Admiral Turner boarded a tug and personally led the fight to save what could be saved. At great personal danger, he personally supervised the operation until the fires were suppressed. His drive and energy permitted us to sail but one day late and we still landed at Saipan on D-Day at H-Hour.[40]

In a general article about Admiral Turner, his participation in fighting the inferno of burning and exploding LSTs is described in a bit more detail by Robert Johnson in the Honololu *Sunday Advertiser* for 13 September 1959.

> He was rough and tough in West Loch the afternoon and evening of May 21, 1944, in the glare of explosions that might have caused a serious delay in his plans for the capture of Saipan in June.

[40] Hogaboom interview, 15 May 1967.

At the height of the fire and explosions in West Loch that day, a Navy boatswain mate, first class, commanding a yard tug encountered the admiral and included the encounter in his written report later:

I received an order from an Admiral to proceed to T9 (an ammunition depot dock) and put out the fire there. Due to the fact that ammunition was exploding, I backed away.

The Admiral came to me and said: 'Go back in there and stay or I will shoot you.' Four or five LSTs were at T9, all of which were burning and terrible explosions were occurring but I carried out my last order, as I had been told.

Even worse than the loss of the ships and craft was the loss of 163 men and the injury of 396 others.

Since the LSTs were scheduled to sail on 24 May, it took a bit of doing to put the various LST task units and troops back together with all the necessary amtracs and DUKWs and replacement personnel. Departure of the LSTs took place on 25 May, and the sturdy craft made up the lost day while enroute to the assault area.

In reviewing the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry, which investigated the disaster, Admiral King gave the back of his hand to both the Army and the amphibians by stating:

> The organization, training and discipline in the LSTs involved in this disaster leave much to be desired. The lack of proper understanding and compliance with safety precautions when handling ammunition and gasoline, particularly in LST 353 where the first explosion occurred, is also noted. It is perfectly apparent that this disaster was not an 'Act of God.' [41]

It might be observed that adequate ammunition ships might have saved the day. Two naval historians put this problem in perspective in the following way:

> The need for fleet ammunition in large quantities during the early stages of the war did not develop and never became a matter of large scale expenditure, with a corresponding quick replenishment on a gigantic scale, until after we started the Central Pacific drive.
>
> When the Japanese surrendered, there were 50 ammunition ships under Service Squadron Ten control.[42]

[41] Record of Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry to inquire into all the circumstances connected with the explosion in the LST-353 and the subsequent explosion in other ships in West Loch on May 21, 1944, Ser 001466 of 22 May 1944. Rear Admiral John P. Shafroth, Jr., USN, President of the Court.

[42] Carter, *Beans, Bullets and Black Oil,* pp. 110, 112.

FURTHER REORGANIZATION PACIFIC AMPHIBIOUS FORCES

Late in April, 1944, Vice Admiral Turner recommended that the Amphibious Force, Third Fleet, be brought to the Central Pacific from the South Pacific, and that additional Amphibious Groups be established, so that the various landings being contemplated could be adequately prepared for.

Enroute to the Marianas, word was received from COMINCH that a reorganization along these lines was ordered. Six Amphibious Groups were established in Amphibious Force, Pacific.

Group One	Rear Admiral W. H. P. Blandy (1913)
Group Two	Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill (1911)
Group Three	Rear Admiral R. L. Conolly (1914)
Group Four	Rear Admiral L. F. Reifsnider (1910)
Group Five	Rear Admiral G. H. Fort (1912)
Group Six	Rear Admiral F. B. Royal (1915)

The Third and the Fifth Amphibious Force, Pacific, were continued under Rear Admiral T. S. Wilkinson (1909) and Vice Admiral Turner respectively. Rear Admiral Wilkinson was promoted on 12 August 1944 to Vice Admiral. The Administrative Command, Amphibious Force, Commodore W. B. Phillips (1911), was continued and the Training Command, Amphibious Force, Rear Admiral R. O. Davis (1914), was assigned as part of the Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet.[43]

This major increase in the number of amphibious groups showed an acceptance at the highest naval level of the ever increasing number of troops which would be involved in conquering the stepping stones to Japan.

LOADING AND OVERSEAS MOVEMENT

Since the Fourth Marine Division was on the island of Maui, the Second Marine Division on the island of Hawaii, and the 27th Infantry Division on Oahu, and the ports of Kahului on the north coast of Maui and Hilo on the east coast of Hawaii were small, the loading of the Northern Attack Force took inordinately long.

The Southern Attack Force troops were loaded at the small man-made ports in Guadalcanal and the Russell Islands in the Southern Solomons.

[43] (a) COMPHIBFORPAC, letter, Ser 00019 of 26 Apr. 1944; (b) COMPHIBFORPAC War Diary, 2 Jun. 1944; (c) ALPAC-79 of 1 Jun. 1944.

Altogether there were 21 separate movement groups in the Joint Expeditionary Force for the initial phases of the FORAGER Operation, and 33 altogether by 15 June 1944. All were operating on a rigidly controlled schedule. Some groups replenished at Kwajalein, some at Roi-Namur and others at Eniwetok.

The Main Body of the Northern Attack Force took to sea on Decoration Day, 1944, but the lesser amphibians from the Hawaiian area eased out to sea almost daily during the long period from 25 May until 2 June. The Southern Attack Force from almost Down Under sailed between 3 and 6 June 1944.

At Eniwetok, all the assault troops, elements of the beach parties, wave guides and other control officers of the Northern Attack Force were shifted into 32 LSTs. This eliminated any long winded delays on the day of the assault landing. But:

> The trip from Pearl to Saipan was marred by more than 70 breakdowns in the Tractor Groups.[44]
> Frequent tactical drills were held including a full rehearsal of the approach to Saipan. This exercise proved invaluable.[45]

Except for a collision subsequent to an emergency turn at night between the destroyer transport *Talbot* and the *Pennsylvania* on 10 June, the bucking of an adverse current and the usual ration of possible sound contacts of submarines, passage of both *Attack Forces* to the objective area was uneventful.

And as one Flotilla Commander of LSTs bragged:

> Both Tractor Groups arrived in their assigned areas in a precise formation, well closed up, and within one minute of the time they were scheduled to arrive after the voyage of 3500 miles.[46]

ESTIMATES OF JAPANESE TROOP STRENGTH IN THE MARIANAS

In single words, Japanese troop strength in the Marianas was "underestimated" by our Forces before the campaign, and has been "growing" since the campaign.

Some six weeks before the landings, when the basic amphibious plan for

[44] COMLSTFLOT 13, Action Report, 11 Jul. 1944, p. 1.
[45] COMLSTGRP 39, Action Report, 3 Aug. 1944, p. 1.
[46] COMLSTFLOT 13, Action Report, p. 2.

FORAGER was issued, Vice Admiral Turner (CTF 51) approved an intelligence estimate therein, which said:

> It is estimated that by the FORAGER target date, the garrisons will consist of a total of about 30,000 men, including 7,000 construction personnel.[47]

On 31 August 1944, with the three island battles over and won, and the "report stage" reached, Commander Expeditionary Troops (Lieutenant General Smith) estimated that there had been 54,000 Japanese military personnel on the three islands when CTF 51 commenced the assault. This figure was sizably larger than the approximately 2,400 prisoners of war who had been taken and the 43,000 Japanese who had been reported buried. By and large those buried were Japanese military personnel, although not all were combat troops by any means.

The Marines in their historical studies of FORAGER (1950–1954) estimated Japanese military personnel in the Marianas on 15 June 1944 to have been 9,200 on Tinian, 18,500 on Guam, and 29,700 on Saipan for a total of 57,400. The Army historians some years later (1959) estimated that 58,168 Japanese military personnel were on the three islands with 31,629 on Saipan, 8,039 on Tinian and 18,500 on Guam.[48]

If, since World War II the Japanese have recorded their troop strength in the Marianas about 15 June 1944, I have missed it. During the Saipan battle, two Japanese prisoners of war, one a naval commander and executive officer of the naval station there, each estimated the combined strength of Japanese Army and Navy "troops" on Saipan as about 20,000.[49] This could be correct since there were considerable numbers of air base personnel and construction and maintenance personnel, including Koreans who might not, in the minds of the POWs, have been considered "troops."

SAIPAN JAPANESE GARRISON

In accordance with the requirements of Admiral Spruance's Operation Plans, JICPOA provided a weekly estimate of enemy military strength on

[47] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR (CTF 51) Op Plan A10–44, 6 May 1944, Intelligence Annex.

[48] (a) Marine Corps Historical Monographs, Hoffman, *Saipan: The Beginning of the End,* and *The Seizure of Tinian;* and Lodge, *The Recapture of Guam;* (b) Philip A Crowl, *Campaign in the Marianas,* Vol. IX of subseries *The War in the Pacific* in UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1959), pp. 65, 279, 329, Appendix C.

[49] ACS to CTF 56.G–2s Periodic Reports; No. 12 (26 Jun. 1944), No. 21 (5 Jul. 1944) and No. 23 (7 Jul. 1944).

Saipan. When TF 51 sailed from Eniwetok, this estimate was 17,600.[50] Starting with this figure, the first step along the line in the process of escalating estimates located in strictly naval records, is a note in Admiral Nimitz's Command Summary for 17 June (Saipan date) which states that:

> 20,000 troops were estimated to be on Saipan.

And again from the same source on 24 June (Saipan date):

> Among captured documents are those indicating strength of enemy to be about 23,000.

Surprisingly enough, as of 1800 on 10 July 1944, the day after Saipan was "secured," Vice Admiral Turner logged:

> Enemy dead buried by our Troops number 11,948. There are 9006 civilians interned and 736 prisoners of war.[51]

However, after Saipan had been declared "secured," it soon became apparent that there were a large number of "unsecured" Japanese military personnel on the island. CTF 51 logged in his War Diary on 2 August 1944:

> As a result of intensified "clean up" drive, 147 Japanese soldiers were killed on Saipan during the past 24 hours. An average of 50 per day have been killed on Saipan since that island was secured.

A few days later, Vice Admiral Turner logged:

> Since July 15, 1944, 1748 Japanese soldiers have been killed on Saipan, 158 captured and over 850 civilians interned.[52]

When the FORAGER campaign was over and won and the victors were enroute back to Pearl Harbor, busily writing their reports, both CTF 51 (Vice Admiral Turner) and CTF 56 (Lieutenant General Smith) showed marked agreement in their estimates of Japanese military strength on Saipan.

CTF 56 included a reconstituted "Enemy Order of Battle" in his FORAGER Report, indicating there were 26,500 Japanese military personnel on Saipan. CTF 51 wrote:

> From the day of the assault to 15 August approximately 25,144 enemy dead had been buried and 1,810 prisoners captured.

On 7 November 1944, with all the reports of subordinate commanders available to him, with many of the captured Japanese documents translated,

[50] (a) COMGEN Fleet Marine Force, Report of COMGEN Expeditionary Troops (TF 56), Marianas. 4 Oct. 1944, Vol. 3, Encl. (D), p. 2. Hereafter CTF 56 FORAGER Report; (b) CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Monthly Operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas, June 1944, Annex A, para 47.

[51] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary 10 July 1944.

[52] *Ibid.*, 2 and 5 Aug. 1944.

and with the interrogation of all the Japanese prisoners completed, CINCPOA gave a more modest total in his official report to COMINCH on the Saipan operation. He stated that:

> Actually encountered on Saipan were about 4,000 naval troops and 20,000 army troops.[53]

The unknown number of Japanese civilians who were killed while performing logistical tasks in Japanese troop rear areas as the Japanese Army retreated northward, and the considerable number of Japanese civilians who committed suicide in the final days of the battle, both markedly increased the figure of "enemy dead buried" over the actual number of Japanese "troops."

The point of all this is that since the number of assaulting troops should be three to four times the number of defending troops, the failure of our intelligence to determine reasonably closely the very healthy number of Japanese defenders in the Marianas made the task of the Landing Force long, difficult and costly.

Including the Floating Reserve, 71,000 troops were in our original assault force against Saipan. This was quite an adequate number to overrun quickly an island defended by only 17,600 then the estimated Japanese troop strength when TF 51 sailed from Hawaii. With 24,000 Japanese troops on Saipan, our assault forces, using the same ratio, should have numbered in the neighborhood of 100,000.

As one commentator wrote on 23 June 1944, in a "Daily Running Estimate" prepared for COMINCH by his staff.

> Captured documents indicate that there were about 23,000 enemy troops assigned to the defense of Saipan, but it is not known whether this number includes about 7,000 [without equipment] which were recently landed from ships that had been sunk. . . . If there were 30,000 enemy combatant troops available on Saipan, our overall superiority would have been about 2 to 1 which is very small for this type of operation.[54]

The delay in conquering Saipan, basically caused by an inadequate number of assault troops and faulty intelligence upset a lot of people, including Vice Admiral Turner.

[53] (a) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Monthly Operations Report, June 1944, Annex A, p. 12; (b) CTF 51 FORAGER Report, Annex 3 to Encl. (A), p. 2; (c) CTF 56 FORAGER Report, Encl. (D), p. 41.

[54] COMINCH Chart Room, FORAGER Subject File, Running Estimates.

THE GAMBIT

During the last part of the period when Vice Admiral Turner and his Expeditionary Force were wending their way from Guadalcanal and from Pearl towards the Marianas, Task Force 58 was reducing the Japanese aircraft in the Marianas to gadfly impotence. The first TF 58 strike on the afternoon of 11 June was particularly effective since it gained control of the air in the Marianas, the first basic requisite for a successful amphibious operation.

Japanese sources, after the war ended, reported there were over 500 aircraft based on Guam, Tinian, and Saipan about 1 June 1944. But by the time the TF 58 raids had started on 11 June, half of these planes had been ordered to island-hop to Halmahera off the west end of New Guinea to support the Japanese counter-offensive to recapture Biak Island 450 miles to the eastward. As many of the Japanese pilots were recent graduates of the flying schools, operational losses during this long inter-island hop were high. Japanese plane losses during the TF 58 sweeps ran past the 200 mark.[55] When the TF 58 raids were over, there were comparatively few Japanese aircraft around to bother Task Force 51 on 15 June 1944, or on the days to follow.

On 13 June, the fast and big-gunned battleships from Task Force 58 undertook the bombardment of selected targets on Saipan and Tinian. The minesweepers swept the offshore areas to the west of Saipan with the following results:

> Reports from minesweepers which had arrived in Saipan Area on June 13th revealed that surf conditions were favorable. No mines or underwater obstructions have been encountered.[56]

On 14 June, the old battleships of the Expeditionary Force took up the task of pinpoint bombardment of gun positions, and the Japanese batteries retaliated in kind, hitting the battleship *California* and the *Braine* (DD-630).

The same day some 300 UDT personnel swam over the beach approach area and gladly reported that the barrier reef off Charan Kanoa was flat on top and generally only two to four feet under the surface. This would permit DUKWs to cross at many places. No inshore mines were discovered at this

[55] (a) USSBS Interrogation No. 448, Captain Mitsuo Fuchida. Staff CINC Combined Fleet, p. 428; (b) USSBS, *Pacific Campaigns,* Appendix 72, p. 229; (c) USSBS Interrogation No. 434, Captain Akira Sasaki, p. 396; (d) USSBS Interrogation No. 123, Commander Goro Matsura, p. 132.

[56] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 14 Jun. 1944.

time and no underwater obstacles were located off the chosen landing beaches. For quite obvious reasons, the Japanese chose the beaches between Agingan Point and Cape Obiam, providing the closest access (from good beaches) to Aslito Airfield, to be heavily mined with anti-boat and beach mines.

Saipan marked the first assignment of high speed transports to each individual Underwater Demolition Team. Although the practice had been initiated at Kwajalein, Saipan marked the first foot-by-foot daylight reconnaissance by frogmen under cover of blanketing fire by fire support ships against offensive weapons in the beach areas.[57]

THE APPROACH

As the amphibians approached Saipan-Tinian from the east and then worked their way around to Saipan's west coast, one LST recorded the scene:

> At 2010 sighted glow on horizon (port bow) and this developed to be battle action on Saipan. Star shells and other evidence of battle were seen all night.[58]

THE WEATHER—DOG DAY

According to Vice Admiral Turner's War Diary, the weather was:

> Partly cloudy—a few scattered squalls around midday, winds southeasterly 10 to 15 knots. Light to moderate southeast swells.[59]

THE DEMONSTRATION LANDING

The Japanese propaganda English language broadcast gave its reaction to the efforts of Transport Division Ten and Transport Division Thirty off the beaches north of Tanapag Harbor:

> With full knowledge of the enemy's attempt, our garrison forces allowed the invaders to approach as near as possible to the coast and then opened up a fierce concentrated fire on the enemy and foiled the attempt. Thrown into wild confusion by the accurate Japanese fire, the enemy barges, or what was left of them, swiftly returned to their mother vessels at about 8:20 a.m.[60]

[57] (a) Fane and Moore, *Naked Warriors*, pp. 86–88; (b) Plans Division, Pacific Section Staff COMINCH to COMINCH, memorandum, 21 Jun. 1944.

[58] LST–272 War Diary, 14 Jun. 1944.

[59] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 15 Jun. 1944.

[60] CTU 54.4.3 (COMTRANSDIV 30) Action Report, 10 Jul. 1944, p. 8.

Since the transports and their landing craft observed no gunfire from the beach, the only truth in this description is the hour of 0820 when the rear elements of the landing craft returned to their transports and were hoisted aboard.

THE LANDINGS ON SAIPAN

The Saipan assault required a simultaneous landing across a reef 250 to 700 yards wide of two divisions of Marines, landing eight Battalion Landing Teams abreast on eight landing beaches covering a front of 6,000 yards. 8,000 troops were due to go ashore in amtracs in the first hour.

This was the largest landing of the Pacific campaign to date and necessitated the adequate coordination of the Landing Plans of the two Marine divisions, and an organization which would keep the very large number of assault craft, and the early logistic support craft, in reasonable step and balance.

It was the first Central Pacific landing against a large heavily defended island and in marked contrast to the assaults against heavily defended coral strips.

After the battle was well over, the Commander of the assault troops wrote:

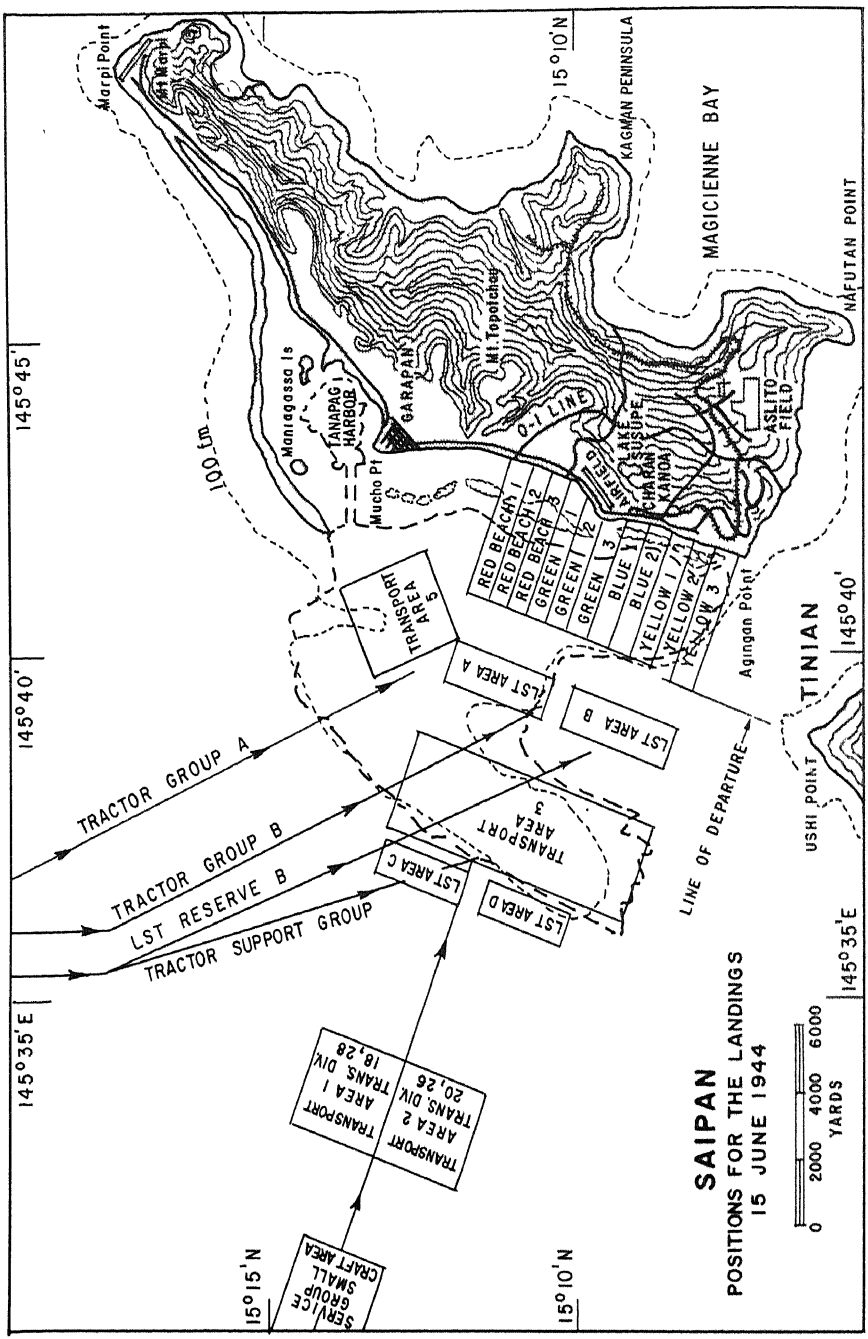
> For the defense of Saipan, the enemy contemplated a series of strong beach defenses and a system of mobile defenses in depth behind the beach areas. . . .
>
> The landing beaches in the Charan Kanoa Area used by BLUE assault forces consisted of approximately 6000 yards of sandy beach backed by an alluvial plain varying from 400 yards to nearly 1 mile in width. The beaches in this vicinity were lined almost continuously by fire trenches, some sections of anti-tank trench, numerous machine gun emplacements and some dual purpose weapons. . . . It appears from the almost complete absence of enemy dead found in the area, that the defenses lining the beach were abandoned by the enemy on D-Day (or earlier).[61]

How Hour was initially set for 0830 but was retarded to 0840, due to delays in transfer of control personnel.[62]

Transport Group Able landed the Second Marine Division on Red and Green beaches while Transport Group Baker did the same chore for the Fourth Marine Division on Blue and Yellow beaches. The Transport Area

[61] CTF 56 FORAGER Report, Vol. 3, 2 Oct. 1944, Encl. (D), p. 60.

[62] CTG 52.2 Action Report, para 10, p. 19.



Landing Plan, Saipan, 15 June 1944.

for the large transports was eight to nine miles from the assigned beaches, and about three miles for the LSTs. The Line of Departure was 4,250 yards from the beach. Assault waves were landed in amtracs largely from LSTs which carried the first waves of Marines right on board.

Transport Group Able had priority for the first two hours subsequent to How Hour on the use of the channel through the reef opposite Beach Blue One. UDT Seven blasted the outer reef for 200 yards opposite the Yellow beaches to open up another highly useful channel and on Dog Day plus two a channel to Red Beach Three was blasted out of the reef by UDT Five.

The Landing Plans were complicated, as can be judged from the fact that the Transport Group Able Plan included four pages of diagrams just for forming up the early waves.

The barrier reef was so shallow that the guide boats could not cross it. Accordingly, Commander Landing Force had agreed that the Boat Control Officer could be instructed:

> The *reef* marks the limit of Navy responsibility for leading in the assault and succeeding waves; from there on in, the troops are on their own. Your job is to get them to the correct part of the reef.[63]

Since "the correct part of the reef" was unmarked by buoys, this was a difficult chore and not perfectly performed.

All the lead waves left the Line of Departure at 0813 for their 4,250 yard run to the beach. Actual landings on all beaches were minutes late, ranging from 0843 on Red and Green to 0854 on Blue and Yellow.[64]

A combination of more active enemy mortar and machine gun fire from the area of Afetna Point and a current inside the reef lagoon, not detected by the UDTs, pushed the landing waves directed to land just north of Afetna Point, where Beach Green Two was located, further northward to Green One. The boat control officers had turned back at the reef and the Marine drivers of the amtracs were on their own while crossing the 600-yard-wide lagoon. The drivers on Red, Blue and Yellow beaches made their designated beaches. The drivers for Red and Green beaches to the north of Afetna Point all eased to the north, but only the ones for Beach Green Two failed to land on the correct beaches.

One of the problems immediately following the assault landings was that subsequent boat traffic for five of the eight beaches (Red Two, Red Three,

[63] CTF 52 Attack Order A11–44, Encl. (A) to Appendix 1 to Annex J, p. 13a.

[64] CTG 52.2 Action Report, 23 Aug. 1944, pp. 20, 87.

Green One, Green Two, Blue One) had to be squeezed through one channel in the outer reef. A Traffic Control Officer with a bull horn undertook this difficult task.

As Commander Transport Division Twenty described the situation in his Saipan Report:

> Unloading across the reef, several hundred yards wide, presented difficulties. The only channel through the reef led to a fair sized pier which was damaged by shell fire and could be used only by a few boats at all stages of the tide. Landing craft could successfully enter through the channel and unload on the beaches only at high tide. Consequently, the majority of the unloading the first day was done by LVTs and DUKWs. Only high priority supplies were unloaded. The limitations imposed by the reef and low tide made it impossible to unload boats rapidly.[65]

And as the Commander 23rd Regimental Combat Team said in his FORAGER Report:

> The time element in landing tanks through the channel was much too long, since only one LCM could negotiate the pass at a time.

THE ASSAULT

Not all the observers or participants saw the initial assault landings in the same way. In the eyes of the big boss, Vice Admiral Turner, everything was pretty much "on the button":

> Initial landings were made successfully on schedule in the face of severe machine gun and mortar fire. This type of opposition proved to be a most critical feature of the day's operation as a deterrent element. Dive bombing by planes and close interdictive fire by supporting ships proved to be effective counter measures. . . .
>
> By 1800, Line 01 [first day's objective] reached. 20,000 troops had been landed.[66]

Rear Admiral Hill, the boss at the next echelon down, detailed the assault landings in these words:

> The landing was made with precision and with only a slight difference in time of landing of first waves on all beaches. Casualties in troops and vehicles en route to the beach were extremely light, but shortly after landing the beach area was brought under fire by mortars and light artillery defiladed on the high ground in rear of the beaches. These guns were well camouflaged

[65] CTG 52.4, Action Report, 30 Jun. 1944, p. 3.
[66] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 15 Jun. 1944.

and difficult to locate and during the first three days continued to inflict serious casualties upon our troops and beach parties.

By evening a narrow beachhead had been won, with a gap between Second and Fourth MARDIVS in Charan Kanoa Town. Heavy swells had built up on the reef. Two [actually eight] loaded LVTs were overturned and several men drowned. It was necessary to suspend unloading by LVT across the reef DOG night.[67]

Way, way down the command chain, some of the operational problems loomed larger in the Dog Day reports.

The Commander of the LCI gunboats logged the reasons for not providing all the planned close gunfire support of the initial assault waves as follows:

The LCI(G)s were stationed at the line of departure by 0750 and. . . . preceded the first assault waves into the beaches by 200 yards.

. . . Due to the protruding reef, the LCI(G)s did not open fire with their 20mm guns or fire their rockets [on Red and Green beaches] as the range was too great for effective fire. . . . LCI(G)s . . . firing on Blue and Yellow beaches were able to get close enough to the beaches to effectively fire their 20mm guns and rockets.

While leading the first waves into the beach numerous mortar bursts landed in the water very close to the line of advancing LCI(G)s. LCI(G)-726 suffered a direct mortar hit, killing 2 enlisted men and wounding the Commanding Officer, one other officer and two (2) enlisted men. . . . Other LCI(G)s had a great many pieces of shrapnel from mortar shells. . . . LCI(G)-451, firing on Red Beach suffered one direct hit from a salvo of enemy shells of 3″ to 5″ diameter. The shell hit the starboard life raft, took off part of the ladder from the maindeck aft to the top of the deck house, went thru the main deck and out the side of the ship in number 4 troop compartment, just forward of the magazines. It severed the entire main electric trunk line. . . .[68]

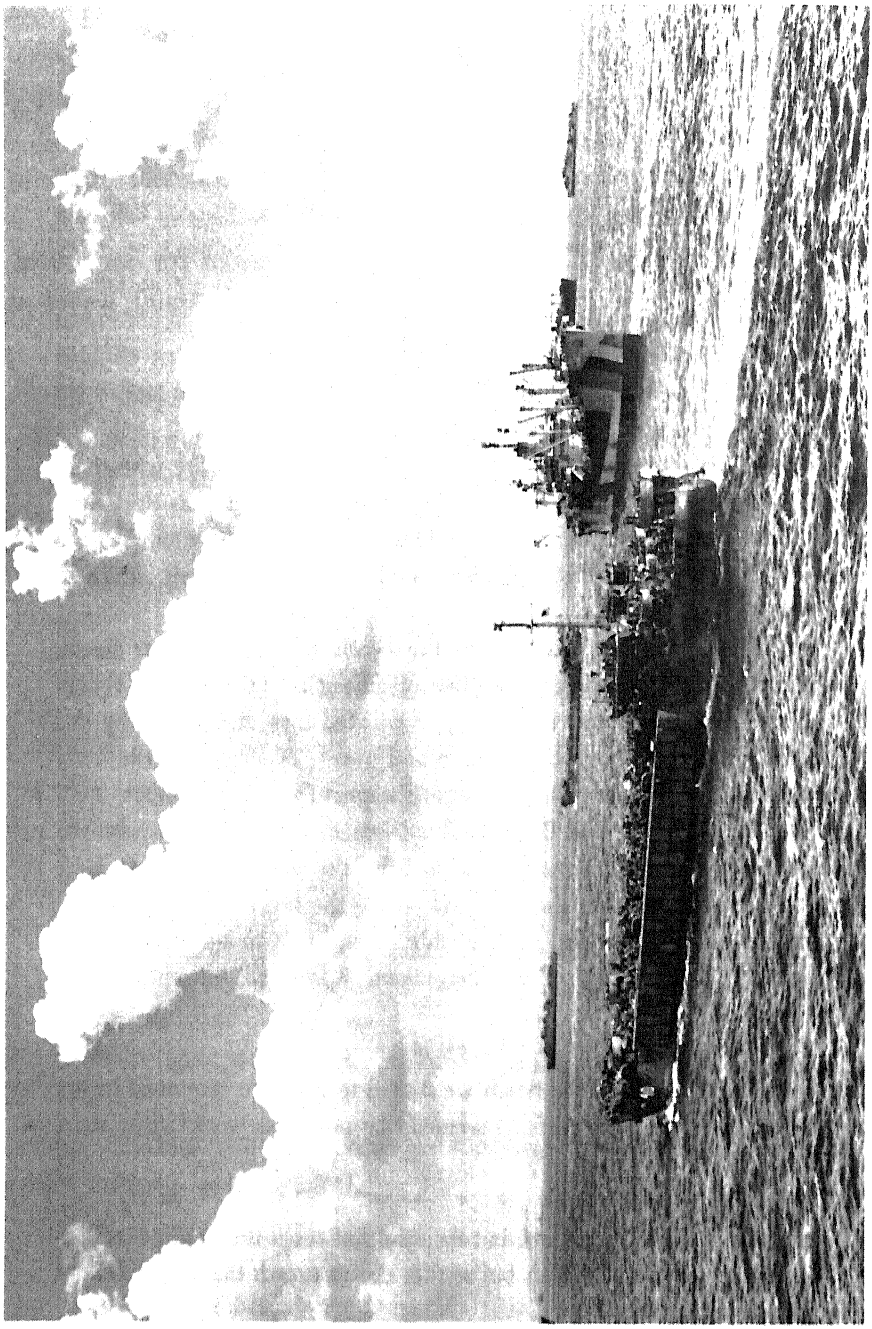
* * * * *

About 2500 yards from the beach we started to fire. We continued to fire until the boats reached the reefs. It seemed that our shots were falling short of the beach.[69]

* * * * *

Fired ranging shots of rockets, but they did not reach the beach. Fired, in all, four rounds of ranging shots but as they did not reach the beach, did not fire any more rockets.[70]

[67] CTG 52.2 Action Report, pp. 20, 21.
[68] LCI(G)FLOT Three War Diary, 15 Jun. 1944.
[69] LCI(G)-455 Operational Remarks, 15 Jun. 1944.
[70] LCI(G)-726 War Diary, 15 Jun. 1944.



80-G-307729

Landing craft and transports busy at Saipan.

The LSTs had their problems also.

> 0637 bow doors opened. 0703 ramp completely lowered. Port ramp chain broken. 0704 1st LVT off. 0711 17th LVT off. Both ramp chains broken.[71]
>
> * * * * *
>
> 2140, severely damaged our ramp while recovering disabled LVTs. The hinge which controls the ramp parted, with the exception of one small piece Due to this ramp condition it was impossible to launch the three LVT's on board after completion of repairs.[72]
>
> * * * * *
>
> This ship launched 17 tanks in seven minutes and thirty seconds.[73]

Despite the swell described officially as "mild" at 0700 on 15 June, not all landing craft commanders agreed. For example:

> This vessel first to complete disembarking all vehicles. Both ramp chains parted due to heavy swell, ramp emergency raising gear carried away—rigged jury rig immediately.[74]
>
> * * * * *
>
> Vessels this Task Unit arrived at line of departure and began launching LVTs and DUKWs in accordance with schedule. Surf conditions unfavorable, making launching difficult. Several vehicles suffered damage and the ramps and ramp hoisting gear of several LSTs were damaged. Launching was accomplished, however, without delay.[75]

The Japanese coast defense guns and artillery worried the landing craft late on Dog Day and the conscience of at least one of the skippers who retreated from them. Representative LST reports follow.

> D-Day night about 1915 LST-224 was fired upon from Saipan. Four shells hit ahead of the starboard bow approximately 100 yards. The enemy apparently sought and obtained our range with what appeared to be 5" shells. Their deflection was off about 100 yards which provided time to get underway and back down away from the shelling. . . . Having orders not to fire on the Island, and our heaviest gun being 3"50 cal., the only alternative was to withdraw out of range to protect the ship's personnel and cargo, as did other landing craft in the area.[76]
>
> * * * * *
>
> Constant reports from the beach described very rough fighting, particularly during the night, which kept our forces from maintaining orderly dumps.[77]

[71] LST-226 War Dairy, 15 Jun. 1944.
[72] LST-242 War Diary, 15 Jun. 1944.
[73] LST-271 War Diary, 15 Jun. 1944.
[74] LST-267 War Diary, 15 Jun. 1944.
[75] LSTGRP 14 War Diary, 15 Jun. 1944.
[76] LST-224 War Diary, 15 Jun. 1944.
[77] LST-278 War Diary, 16 Jun. 1944.

* * * * *

All seriously wounded men were sent to other ships which had doctors, this being sometimes hard to do because hospital ships were not always in sight and it was like sending the coxswains on a wild goose chase. However, it would have been folly to try to care for apparently dying men on a ship without skilled doctors.[78]

THE WEATHER DETERIORATES

Rear Admiral Hill had this to say about the weather:

A heavy swell, which existed from the night of DOG Day until DOG plus One morning, prevented delivery of supplies across the barrier reef facing RED, GREEN, and YELLOW beaches and forced all supplies for both divisions to be handled across BLUE Beaches.[79]

While this was a temporary problem, the longer range problem was:

Unloading of boats on the Red beaches was possible only from two hours before until two hours after high tide.[80]

As Commander Transport Division Twenty reported in regard to Dog Day plus one:

The congestion of boats at the reef continued because of the limited beach usable at high tide and the fact that boats could not reach the beach at low tide.

Early construction of a causeway pier at Beach Blue One facilitated logistic support, and LSTs were beached successfully on the reef opposite Yellow One on 17 June. The 27th Division troops were put ashore on the 16th, 17th, and 19th, the last Regimental Combat Team wading ashore from LSTs beached on the reef opposite Yellow Three.

By DOG plus Three there were nearly 50,000 troops ashore and a large amount of artillery.[81]

There were problems other than the heavy surf which held up logistic support from time to time during the first few days. These were the Japanese aircraft flown down from Iwo Jima and the Empire.

[78] *Ibid.*, 15 Jun. 1944.
[79] CTG 52.2 Action Report, p. 74.
[80] TRANSDIV 28 Control Officer. Report of Control Operation on Dog Day, 11 Jul. 1944, p. 3.
[81] CTG 52.2 Action Report, p. 74.

THE JAPANESE GADFLIES

The amphibians had gotten through the Kwajalein and Eniwetok assaults without a single Japanese airplane to worry them. This was not the case in the Marianas.

Task Force 51 was sighted by a Japanese plane the morning of 13 June and was under minor air attack three times on 15 June by one to five Japanese planes. No air attacks on Task Force 51 occurred on 16 June. There were five attacks by formations of three to forty Japanese planes commencing late in the day of 17 June 1944. From that date until 7 July the amphibians ate smoke a fair share of each night. There were 70 designated Japanese air raids noted during these twenty days, but the largest number of planes in a single attack was 12, and a good share of the Japanese planes were shot down by the combat air patrol before getting in close to the amphibians. By and large, the Japanese planes came down the Marianas Chain to the battle area and were reserviced at Guam and Rota. During the days of the Battle of the Philippine Sea a number of planes were flown into Guam from the Japanese carriers and enroute they harassed the amphibians.[82]

All the amphibious craft contributed their might to the defense of the Transport Area, as the following LST reports will indicate:

> At 1915 a single engine Jap bomber dove at us from starboard to port at a distance of about 50 yards off the water, dropping a small bomb which missed. All the ships in the area opened fire but none seen to hit the plane which was very fast and visible at most for only a second or two, as the time of night and overcast sky made visibility very poor.[83]

Another witness pictured this incident as follows:

> On the evening of 17 June, the retiring LSTs were attacked by one VAL. Fire was not opened until the plane was in the dive. It was ineffective. For the majority of the LSTs, this was the first Jap plane they had ever seen. It is certain that buck fever had many of the gunners. The one bomb released was a near miss off the bow of LST-42. Strafing, or gunfire from other LSTs started a fire forward on LST-84. . . . LST-23 and LST-128 also had casualties resulting from shrapnel. . . .[84]

And the final report of this brief incident:

> The Japanese bomber was about as accurate as our gunfire. With upward of 30 ships to hit, he scored a good clean miss.[85]

[82] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Monthly Operations Report, June 1944, Appendix 8.
[83] LST-272 War Diary, 17 Jun. 1944.
[84] COMLSTFLOT 13 Action Report, 11 Jul. 1944, p. 7.
[85] COMLSTGRP 39, Action Report, 3 Aug. 1944.

Rear Admiral Conolly had talked to everyone who would listen about the great value of smoke during air attacks and while a "Smoke Plan" had existed throughout the Central Pacific campaign, Saipan marked its first extensive use. By the time Saipan had been secured, the amphibians had absorbed many Japanese air raids and only the jeep carrier *Fanshaw Bay* and the battleship *Maryland* absorbed hits from them. The plane that torpedoed the *Maryland* while she was anchored sneaked in without being detected by radar. Rear Admiral Hill noted:

> Despite this large number of air attacks, only minor damage was suffered. This fact is attributed in part to the excellence of land based anti aircraft batteries and night fighters, but at least equal credit should be given to the protection provided the ships by heavy smoke cover.[86]

The cargo ship Mercury (AK-42) was the first amphibious ship to gain a sure kill of a Japanese plane since the *George F. Elliott* absorbed one at Guadalcanal nearly two years before. Vice Admiral Turner's War Diary stated:

> The *Mercury* was credited with a kill when a Jap plane was destroyed by crashing into one of her booms. The pilot was killed.[87]
>
> * * * * *
>
> Enemy tactics in the air have persistently been to fly low to avoid radar detection. Steps have been taken to rearrange our radar pickets so as to improve our technique in picking up these planes.[88]

THE JAPANESE FIRST MOBILE FLEET MOVES UP

Long before the battle on Saipan had been won, the Japanese First Mobile Fleet, under Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, took a fling at our amphibious forces, but found that Admiral Spruance and a reenforced Task Force 58 stood in the way.

Separately, the Fast Carrier Task Force 58 comprised seven carriers and eight cruiser-hulled carriers, guarded by seven fast battleships, three heavy cruisers, ten light cruisers and 52 destroyers.[89] Ships pulled out from the Joint Expeditionary Force and added to TF 58 included four heavy cruisers, three light anti-aircraft cruisers and 18 destroyers. Additionally, the Fleet Flagship *Indianapolis* with its two protecting destroyers moved from TF 51 to TF 58.

[86] CTG 52.2 Action Report, p. 82.
[87] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 27 Jun. 1944.
[88] *Ibid.*, 2 Jul. 1944.
[89] CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Monthly Operations Report, June 1944, Annex A.

Also, the eight older battleships, the three remaining cruisers and a good share of the remaining destroyers of the Joint Expeditionary Force were told off to cover the Transport Area during darkness from a position about 25 miles to its westward, especially to guard against the possibility that a fast detachment of the Japanese First Mobile Fleet might do an end run around TF 58 and seek to attack the cargo ships and disrupt the logistic support of the troops on Saipan.

DAYS OF CHANGE

The 16th and 17th of June 1944, were days when the plans of the Joint Expeditionary Force were subject to many changes, as the Japanese First Mobile Fleet charged into the Philippine Sea from Tawi Tawi.

Kelly Turner's War Diary had these entries:

> TG 52.10, Bombardment Group Two and the *Hopkins, Perry, Long* and *Hamilton* had been directed to proceed to Guam to initiate scheduled attack [on June 18th]. However, due to imminence of a major engagement west of Saipan, Com 5th Fleet cancelled the tentative date of attack on Guam and directed CTF 51 to make preparations to reinforce carrier forces of TF 58.[90]

The Battle of the Philippine Sea has been well and brilliantly told by a number of authors. There has been strong support from the Marines, from those who were in the amphibious forces, and from Fleet Admiral King in regard to the manner in which the battle was fought by Admiral Spruance.

Admiral Turner wrote in his speech "Major Aspects of the Marianas Campaign":

> Before leaving Pearl Harbor, lengthy discussions were held concerning the prospect of Fleet action. Tentative decisions were made as to what action we should take if Fleet action should eventuate. The ideas of major commands were in complete accord that whatever happened, Task Force 58 would adequately cover the Expeditionary Force during its landing of troops.
>
> On June 16th, it became certain that the Japanese Fleet would attack. We believed then, and know now, that Admiral Toyoda's objective was air attack on the transports, using the airfields on Guam and Tinian for refueling and rearming.
>
> So on June 16th, after further conferences, Admiral Spruance made these decisions:
>
> a. Reenforce TF 58 with 7 cruisers and 18 destroyers from the Expeditionary Force, and concentrated at noon June 18th, 350 miles to west to (1) cover the Saipan landings and (2) attack the Japanese Fleet.

[90] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 16 Jun. 1944.

b. Continue transport unloading until dark June 17th, [then] leave behind the transports and LSTs needed immediately, plus screen and small craft, and secretly move the bulk of transports and LSTs out of sight to the eastward of Saipan. From there, transports and LSTs would be returned for unloading as called for.

c. Continue full gunfire support of troops, but during darkness form up remaining battleships, cruisers and DDs 25 miles to the west in covering position.

d. With three CVE divisions, provide [combat air patrol] CAP for ships near Saipan, and provide air for troops support as available.

What happened?

By dark June 18th, the enemy Fleet was thought to be still well to the westward. Admiral Spruance was strongly urged by some officers to make a fast run west and surprise the enemy at dawn. Instead he retired, as previously planned, toward Guam.

In fact, the end run had already been made [by the Japanese]. At 0720 next morning CAP planes of the nearby Task Force 58 caught Japanese planes taking off from the Guam airfield after re-fueling. Then the Turkey Shoot began. By nightfall, Admiral Toyoda had had enough and started home. For a few days, our forces at Saipan had some minor air attacks by planes from Guam that had remained hidden, but damage was slight and there was not much interference with our landing operations.

The point is mentioned to emphasize the importance of sticking to the objective. The Fifth Fleet objective then was the capture of Saipan, and only secondarily the defeat of the Japanese Fleet. To capture Saipan, we needed the transports afloat and not sunk. Suppose at 0800 on June 19th, Admiral Mitscher had been 600 miles away with all his planes in the air!

Admiral Spruance's decision to adhere strictly to a course of action that would *ensure* the accomplishment of the major objective of that great military adventure was sound and wise.[91]

Long before World War II ended, Fleet Admiral King had expressed his strong approval of the manner in which the Battle of the Philippine Sea was fought. In his Second Report to the Secretary of the Navy, issued 27 March 1945, and covering combat operations from 1 March 1944 to 1 March 1945, Fleet Admiral King wrote:

As the primary mission of the American Forces in the area was to capture the Marianas, the Saipan amphibious operations had to be protected from enemy interference at all costs. In his plans for what developed into the Battle of the Philippine Sea, Admiral Spruance was rightly guided by this basic mission. He therefore operated aggressively to the westward of the Marianas,

[91] R. K. Turner, Presentation at the General Line School, 5 Dec. 1949.

> but did not draw his carriers and battleships so far away that they could not protect the amphibious units.

In 1952, this still remained his view.[92]

While Admiral Spruance was beating off the onrush of the Japanese Fleet, the situation ashore had continued to improve, and on 20 June, Lieutenant General H. M. Smith, Commander Northern Troops And Landing Force (CTG 56.1), assumed command ashore at about 1000.

After the threat of the Japanese Fleet had been met and successfully dissipated by the Fifth Fleet under Admiral Spruance, the Commander Joint Expeditionary Force turned his thoughts again to the necessity of conserving the troops previously allotted for the Guam assault for that purpose. The Commander Joint Expeditionary Troops, being faced with a rugged and skillful defense by larger than anticipated Japanese forces on Saipan, and an extinction chore that was going slowly, cast envious eyes on the troops allocated for the Guam assault.

In a despatch designed to restate the necessity of retaining the troops still afloat and regaining control of those (the 106th Regimental Combat Team) already ashore on Saipan, Vice Admiral Turner informed CTF 56 that:

> While recognizing the decisive character of the operations for the capture of Saipan, the great importance of the early capture of Guam in this campaign is also realized. Unless further shore operations become unfavorable, CTF 51 is not willing to accept the decision to postpone the Guam attack until the Army's 77th Division arrives.[93]

Despite this unwillingness of CTF 51, the Guam attack was postponed until after the 77th Division arrived there. In fact, the date for launching the Guam assault was set exactly by the "when" the 77th would be available at Guam.

THE DELAYED TIME TABLE

The Japanese defense at Saipan was stronger and more successful than had been anticipated. By 21 June, the whole of the Expeditionary Force Reserve had been landed, bringing to three full divisions plus Fifth Corps troops fighting on Saipan. The very bitter defense encountered thereafter eventually led to the unwelcome but quite sound decision not to go ahead with a landing on Guam until Saipan was in hand. That is, it was better to

[92] *King's Record*, p. 563.
[93] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 21 Jun. 1944.

ensure the complete control of Saipan rather than to have a foothold on both Saipan and Guam without complete control of either one. The troops of the Southern Attack Force were looked upon as a possible further reserve to bolster the hard fighting troops on Saipan. So the Southern Attack Force cruised around and around to the eastward of Saipan, waiting for favorable developments, before undertaking its assault on Guam.

On 17 June it was decided by CINCPOA to prepare one Regimental Combat Team in Hawaii for possible early employment in the Marianas by immediate movement to Saipan.

On the 21th, the decision was taken to bring all the 77th Infantry Division forward from the Hawaiian Islands as soon as practicable. By dark 22 June, the last of enough transports to lift two Regimental Combat Teams of the 77th Infantry Division were unloaded at Saipan and hurried back to Pearl. Lift for the initial RCT of the 77th was already gathering at Pearl Harbor.

As Vice Admiral Turner wrote to his old subordinate, Wilkinson:

> It was evident that we needed that division for Guam and, in fact, used it beginning the second day of the Guam landing.[94]

On 24 June, the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade was designated the Floating Reserve for the Saipan operation and the rest of the Southern Landing Force was ordered to return to Eniwetok to await the decision as to when it would assault Guam.

On 5 July 1944, Vice Admiral Turner wrote a letter to Admiral Nimitz which among other things said:

> Of course, we all feel disappointed over the fact that the Marianas Campaign is not going as rapidly as had been hoped for, particularly because of the ill effect on STALEMATE [Palau Island—Assault].
>
> * * * * *
>
> There will be a let-down at the end of the Saipan capture, as the troops are only human, and it would be desirable to have some fresh troops for Tinian, though that is now impossible. We will get ready for that operation as soon as possible, but can't predict the date. It would be better, for some reasons, to hold off until the attack on Guam is well started, but we will not do so if we can get the troops rehabilitated in time.[95]

And when it got down to hard actualities, Vice Admiral Turner did hold

[94] RKT to TSW, letter, 30 Jul. 1944. See also COMGENCENPAC to CG 24th Corps, 180900 June 1944; COMFIFTHFLT to CINCPOA, 240622 Jun. 1944. CTF 51 to CINCPAC, 232020 Jun. 1944.

[95] RKT to CWN, letter, 5 Jul. 1944.

off on Tinian until the attack on Guam was well started. The latter started on 21 July and the Tinian assault three days later.

In the letter of 30 July 1944, to Rear Admiral Wilkinson, in discussing the delay in capturing Saipan, Vice Admiral Turner wrote:

> We simply didn't have enough troops here, and the reason we didn't have enough troops was that we didn't have enough ships to bring them in.[96]

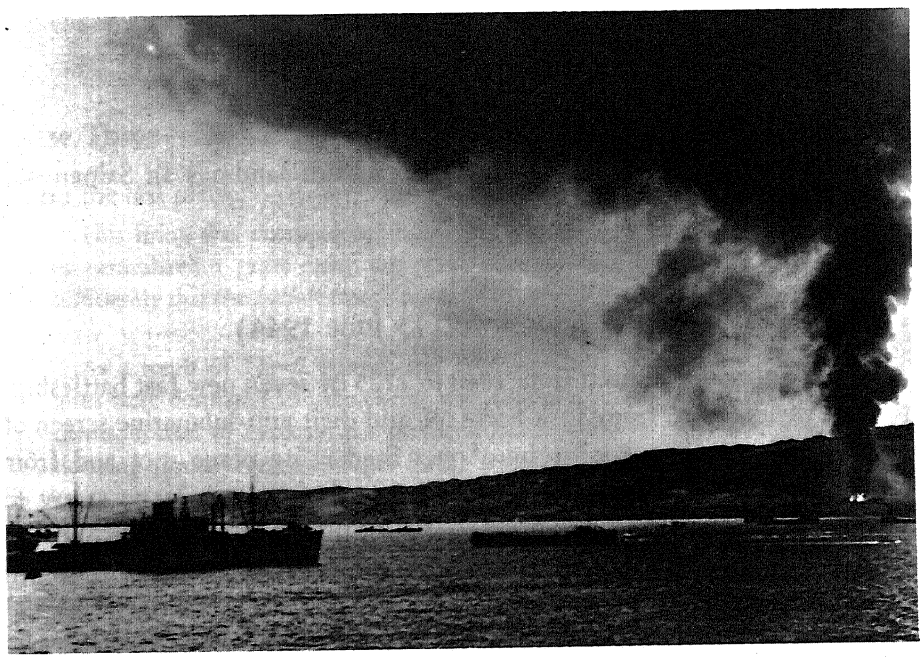
The number of ships available in the Pacific for FORAGER was strongly influenced by the fact that the gargantuan amphibious landing in Normandy, France, occurred earlier in the same month as Saipan and had an over-riding call on worldwide transport and cargo ship resources.

AT LONG LAST

Slow, but steady progress was made in capturing Saipan.

The Fourth of July was celebrated by taking the towns of Garapan and Tanapag. Five days later:

[96] RKT to TSW, letter, 30 Jul. 1944.



80-G-231985

Convoy moving into forward beach during Saipan attack as seen from the Rocky Mount.

> The Marines raised the American Flag over the airstrip at the northern part of Saipan. By 1625, the entire island was secured and organized resistance ceased.[97]

Vice Admiral Turner sent the following despatch:

> To our brave troops who have captured Saipan, the naval forces who have striven to assist them, I make a bow of respect.[98]

THE COST

On 10 July, the day after Saipan was declared "secure," Vice Admiral Turner logged:

> The following is the estimate of casualties to our forces as of 1800 today. Total casualties 15,053. Of this number 2,359 were killed, 11,481 wounded and 1,213 are missing. Enemy dead buried by our troops number 11,948. There are 9,006 civilians interned and 736 prisoners of war.[99]

Many of our missing turned out to be dead. The total of Japanese buried went up rapidly in the days ahead until it reached 25,144 on 15 August 1944.[100]

NAVAL GUNFIRE SUPPORT

The Naval Gunfire Support prior to the assault landings an Saipan was divided into three phases:

Phase One—Dog Day Minus Two (13 June 1944)

This phase was conducted from 1040 to 1725 by seven new fast battleships temporarily detached from Task Force 58, and their anti-submarine screen of eleven destroyers. The bombardment was fired using plane spot and from ranges in excess of 10,000 yards. This latter precaution was necessary to keep the ships outside of mineable waters until these waters were swept.

Since the Japanese on Saipan had British Whitworth Armstrong 6-inch coast defense guns, as well as their own 140-millimeter coast defense guns,

[97] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 9 Jul. 1944.
[98] CTF 51 092244 Jul. 1944.
[99] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 10 Jul. 1944.
[100] CTF 51 FORAGER Report, Annex 3 to Encl. (A), p. 2.

the statement that the big battleships at 10,000 to 16,000 yards remained out of range of the enemy shore batteries, is incorrect.

The results of the gun bombardment by the fast battleships during Phase I were incommensurate with the weight of metal dropped on Saipan during this bombardment. This was due primarily to inexperience of both the aircraft observers in locating Japanese camouflaged guns and of the gunnery personnel in conducting slow deliberate shore bombardment.

But as the Commanding General, Expeditionary Troops reported:

> Heavy gun installations, power plans, barracks, the buildings of the town and installations at or near the airfield received a particularly heavy shelling.[101]

Phase Two—Dog Day Minus One (14 June 1944)

A succinct summary by the Marines of this phase indicated:

> This bombardment was executed by ships of Task Group 52.17, nearly all of which had had considerable [gunfire support] experience. . . . Their fire delivered with both air and ship spot, was very effective, including direct hits on many important installations.[102]

Phase Three—Dog Day (15 June 1944)

As for the last phase:

> This firing was executed by ships of TASK GROUP 52.17. It destroyed or neutralized a great many important targets and neutralized the beaches sufficiently that the assault troops were able to effect a landing.
>
> * * * * *
>
> As a result of Naval gunfire and air bombardment, many coast defense guns were destroyed and the enemy was, according to Prisoner of War statements, forced to evacuate his prepared beach defenses except for a small delaying forces. Forward slopes facing seaward were rendered only temporarily tenable to the enemy, and his supply, transport, and communication facilities and organizations were reduced to a state of chaos.[103]

Due to the excellence of the Japanese camouflage, the very large number of targets, and the fact that neither photography nor visual observation had located many targets on the reverse slopes of the hills eastward of the landing

[101] CTF 56 FORAGER Report, Vol. 7, Encl. (D), G-2 Report, pp. 10–11.
[102] *Ibid.*, 11.
[103] *Ibid.*, Encl. (G-2), p. 11.

beaches, numerous Japanese mortars and artillery guns were not fired upon prior to the actual Saipan landing.

As late as three months after Saipan had been captured, Lieutenant General Smith, it seems, thought the naval gunfire support in the Marianas was reasonably satisfactory for he wrote in his final report on FORAGER:

> Naval gunfire support was a decisive factor in the conduct of operations, and it is recommended:
>
> 1. That whenever possible, similar extended, deliberate, observed fires be delivered against landing beaches and enemy positions prior to the landing.[104]

Some five years later, however, the worm had turned and the bombardment of Saipan was labeled by General Smith, "The partially ineffective Saipan bombardment." He also stated:

> Three and a half days of surface and air bombardment were not enough to neutralize an enemy of the strength we found on Saipan.[105]

SKILL AND HAZARD

The pinpointed naval gunfire bombardment essential to accomplish the results desired by the assault troops is a difficult chore, and involves manifold hazards and calls for first-rate skills. These aspects were touched upon several times in the reports on the Saipan operation.

The fire control ships were directed to lie to in order to ensure that they would not interfere with the movement of the assault waves to the beach. Throughout the critical assault landing phase, while in this minimum defensive position, they unhappily were in triple jeopardy from coast defense guns, submarines, and air attack. As Rear Admiral Hill noted:

> Close fire support ships were required to remain dead in the water in accurate positions prescribed, from HOW minus THIRTY until the passage of the last assault boat wave. The final support positions were established to place heavy ships at the stipulated minimum distance of 2000 yards from the nearest shoal or reef, and destroyers 1500 yards.

Ammunition replacement was another constant worry. At the end of Dog plus two:

> With no immediate replacement of ammunition available, it became necessary to restrict the rate of starshell expenditure to 6 per hour per ship except

[104] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[105] Smith, *Coral and Brass*, p. 162.

> for emergencies, and to limit the amount of AA common available for support of troops to all in excess of 60 rounds per gun, per ship, which was to be held in reserve for surface and air action.[106]

Rear Admiral Hill, a long time naval gunnery expert, finished up the Saipan operation with a very warm feeling for the naval gunfire support provided. He wrote:

> There can remain little doubt that naval gunfire is the most feared and most effective of all weapons which the Japanese are confronted in resisting a landing and assault. Without exception, prisoners of war have stated that naval gunfire prevented their movement by day or night and was the most deciding factor in accomplishing their defeat.[107]

This opinion was supported by the Chief of Staff of the Japanese high command on Saipan who in reporting to Army Headquarters in Tokyo, radioed:

> The call fire on land is extremely quick and exact and until night attack units are some tens of meters from the enemy, they continue to receive naval gunfire.
>
> * * * * *
>
> If there just were no naval gunfire, we feel with determination that we could fight it out with enemy in decisive battle.[108]

The most vocal supporters of naval gunfire effectiveness were the Japanese prisoners and diarists. Among their many plugs for the Navy gun, the following are selected:

> [POW] The greatest single factor in the American success [was] naval gunfire—
>
> [Diarist] Practically all our anti-aircraft guns and machine gun positions were destroyed by bombing and shelling on the 13th, 14th and 15th. . . .
>
> * * * * *
>
> [Diarist] I have at last come to the place where I will die. I am pleased to think that I will die calmly in true samurai style. Naval gun fire supported this attack which was too terrible for words. [Diary 13 June, Day of Bombardment by fast battleships].[109]

[106] CTG 52.2, Action Report, pp. 86–87, 92.

[107] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

[108] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Monthly Operations Report, June 1944, Appendix 9, Translations of Japanese despatches, pp. 6, 9.

[109] (a) Quoted in Carl W. Hoffman, *Saipan: The Beginning of the End,* Marine Corps Monograph (Washington: Historical Branch, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1950), p. 248; (b) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 116–45, Translations Interrogations No. 29, 21 May 1945, Intern No. B-1938.

As previously noted, there were some balancing U.S. opinions to come to light a bit later.

Since the length of the shore gun bombardment is always brought into question in connection with an assault landing, it is worth stating that long continued shore gun bombardment by heavy ships always draws enemy submarines to the area like bees to a honey comb. It was true at Guadalcanal, in the Gilberts, and in the Marshalls. So there was and is a naval reluctance to stay still in one spot in an area or even to stay around in an area too long and invite submarine attack. This is despite the real advantages to the assaulting troops of a long continued gun bombardment.

A study of Japanese naval records by the Far East Command in the early 1950s indicated that the Japanese lost fourteen submarines in the Marianas area during June and July 1944. These were RO-36, 42, 44, 48, 111, 114, 117, the I-5, 10, 26, 54, 55, 184, 185.[110] It was a minor miracle, despite our very excellent anti-submarine defense, that the ships of Task Force 51 and of Task Force 58 remained for long weeks in the vicinity of the Marianas without sustaining losses from these Japanese submarines.

THE HARD WON VICTORY

While the skill of our commanders was great and the valor of our troops unending, the battle was made longer by the low ratio of assaulting troops to enemy defenders. It would be unperceptive not to say also that a basic ingredient in the long and bloody struggle for Saipan was the confidence of the Japanese Commander and his troops in their ability to defeat an amphibious assault.

And a quixotic ingredient in the cause of the Japanese eventual defeat is drawn from the following record:

> A POW taken late in the preceding period near Matansa, states that he is a chief Petty Officer. Was Chief Yeoman to Vice Admiral Nagumo, Commander Central Pacific Area, with Headquarters at Garapan, Saipan. POW states that Vice Admiral Nagumo and Rear Admiral Yano committed suicide 1030 7 July at the temporary headquarters located inland from Matansa. POW witnessed the suicides. . . . POW, acting in his capacity of Chief Yeoman wrote the order issued by Vice Admiral Nagumo for the counter attack against our forces on the morning of 7 July. The same order com-

[110] The Japanese Monograph No. 116, *The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II,* Military History Section, Special Staff, General Headquarters, Far East Command, February 1952, pp. 202, 204.

manded all civilian and military personnel remaining on the north end of Saipan to commit suicide on 7 July. . . .[111]

SAIPAN LAND MARKS

As one of the most experienced amphibians, Commodore H. B. Knowles, wrote at the end of the war in regard to amphibious techniques:

> The Saipan Landing Plan is a landmark in Pacific amphibious history, for it incorporates what became the technique for all later amphibious landings in the Central Pacific and the major assaults in the Philippines. Described in this plan for the first time are the duties and organization of a control and beachmaster set up to handle a landing of multiple troop divisions; an expanded communication net work to cover this more complex structure; a system for the transfer of assault troops to LSTs in the final staging area and the despatch of LVTs at the Line of Departure with troops already embarked; the use of rocket and mortar ships in direct support of the assault waves; and the addition of hospital LSTs close in shore to speed casualty handling.[112]

[111] CTF 56 FORAGER Report, Vol. I, Encl (A), G-2 Periodic Report, p. 3.

[112] Transport Squadron 12, Command History, 8 Nov. 1945, p. 16.

CHAPTER XXII

The Nut Cracker After the Fall of Saipan Tinian—Guam

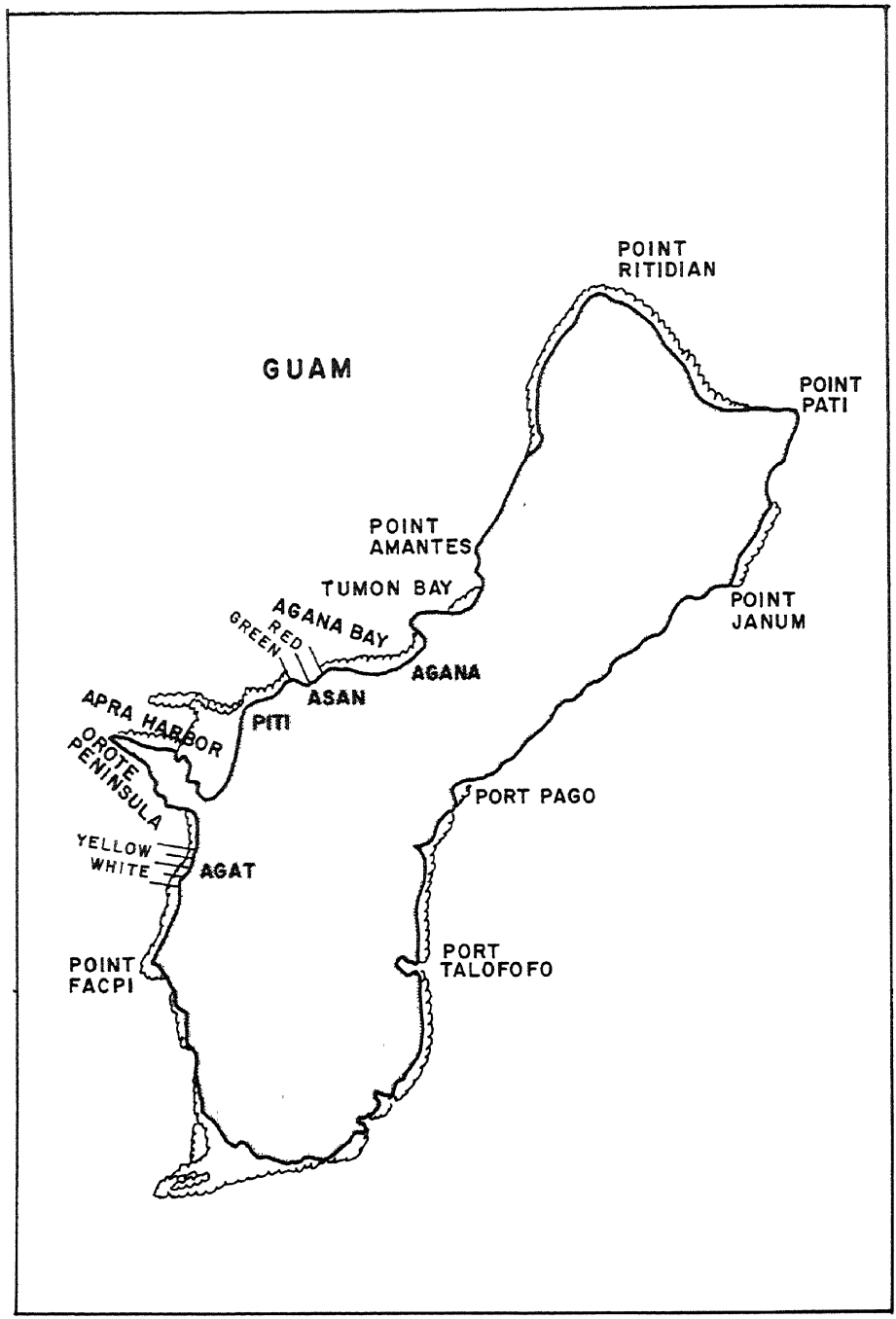
Before dropping the Saipan Operation and moving on to the amphibious assaults against Guam and Tinian, it is necessary to touch on Vice Admiral Turner's part in the forced detachment of Major General Ralph C. Smith from his command of the 27th Infantry Division, some of the background thereof, and the subsequent furor.

PRELUDE

The 27th Infantry Division was one of the five infantry divisions in Task Force 56, the Expeditionary Troops. Initially, the 27th had constituted the Floating Reserve for the Saipan assault. Ordered to land on 16 June, the 27th participated in the fighting, commencing 17 June 1944.

When mustered into federal service in October 1940, the 27th Infantry Division was a unit of the National Guard of the state of New York. In 1943–1944, its three infantry regiments were the 105th, 106th, and 165th. The 165th Regiment had evolved out of the old 69th Regiment, New York Infantry, the Fighting Irish of World War I fame. It, along with one battalion of the 105th, fought at Makin. Two battalions of the 106th Regiment had fought at Eniwetok. While two battalions of the 105th Regiment and one battalion of the 106th had not been battle tested during World War II, about two-thirds of the division had battle experience, since some of the organized artillery, engineers, and service units had been at Makin.[1]

[1] (a) Edmund G. Love, *The 27th Infantry Division in World War II* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1949); (b) Love, "Smith versus Smith," *Infantry Journal,* LXIII (November 1948), pp. 3–13; (c) Robert Sherrod, "An Answer and Rebuttal to 'Smith versus Smith,' The Saipan Controversy," *Infantry Journal,* LXIV (January 1969), pp. 14–28; (d) Holland M. Smith and Percy Finch, "My Troubles with The Army on Saipan," *Saturday Evening Post,* VII (13 November 1948), pp. 32–33, 65–66, 68, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 80, 82.


GUAM
POINT RITIDIAN
POINT PATI
POINT AMANTES
TUMON BAY
AGANA BAY
GREEN
RED
AGANA
ASAN
PITI
APRA HARBOR
OROTE PENINSULA
YELLOW
WHITE
AGAT
POINT FACPI
PORT PAGO
PORT TALOFOFO
POINT JANUM

Guam.

Major General Ralph C. Smith, an officer of the regular Army since 1917, had commanded the 27th Infantry Division commencing 20 November 1942. According to a history of the 27th Division during World War II, "He . . . was considered the outstanding expert on the French Army and language." [2]

Major General Ralph C. Smith had been aboard the flagship *Pennsylvania* in November 1943, rubbing elbows with his operational senior, Commander Northern Landing Force (Turner), when General Smith was Commander Northern Landing Troops, and conducting the ground operations at Makin in the Gilbert Islands. Major General H. M. Smith, USMC, also was aboard the *Pennsylvania* at the same time, being the Corps Commander of the Fifth Amphibious Corps and Commander Expeditionary Troops. Not only at Makin, but during the Eniwetok phase of the Marshall Island operations, units of the 27th Infantry Division had been attached to the Fifth Amphibious Corps and under the operational control and consequent observation of Commander, Fifth Amphibious Corps (H. M. Smith).

As a result of dissatisfaction with the way that the Commanding General, 27th Division was fighting his troops on Saipan, the Commander Fifth Fleet, on 24 June 1944, upon recommendation of Commander Expeditionary Force (Turner) and of Commander Expeditionary Troops (H. M. Smith),

> Authorized and directed the relief of Major General Ralph Smith as Commanding General, 27th Division in order that the offensive on Saipan may proceed in accordance with the plans and orders of the Commander Northern Troops and Landing Force.[3]

Major General Sanderford Jarman, USA, the prospective Island Commander, Saipan, relieved Major General Ralph C. Smith forthwith.

SMITH VS SMITH

When I asked Admiral Turner in 1960 if he had any documents or opinions to contribute to the controversy arising because Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, USMC, recommended the relief of his subordinate, Major General Ralph Smith, AUS, he replied in length:

> I have a Smith vs Smith file which I will give you. Besides copies of some letters and some clippings it has a half dozen despatches which I thought were important and so kept a copy of them. You may not find them readily available.

[2] Love, p. 22.

[3] COMFIFTHFLT 240100 Jun. 1944.

Admiral Nimitz was very much upset by the incident when it happened and a lot more upset after the war when it was dragged out in the *Infantry Journal* and *The Saturday Evening Post* and rehashed all over again During the War, Admiral Nimitz tried to sweep the matter under the rug in order to keep the controversy from causing any lessening of the 110% cooperation between the Services which he urged at all times, and by and large got.

I supported his action then, and still support it.

There are a couple of things about the controversy that you may not now know:

First: Before we went into the Marshalls, 'Nervous Nellie' Richardson (Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson, Jr., USA) (Commanding General, Army Forces, Central Pacific Area) gave Admiral Nimitz an 'eyes only' memorandum, [for eyes of Admiral Nimitz alone] in which he recommended that the Fifth Amphibious Corps Headquarters [Major General Holland M. Smith, USMC] be limited to administrative duties and that when a future amphibious operation arrived necessitating employment of a corps, that both the Corps Headquarters and the Corps Troops be furnished by the Army. News of that unhappy proposal was soon floating around Pearl Harbor and raising the hackles of every Marine in the Fifth Corps.

Second: After Eniwetok, Harry Hill told me that he was far from happy about the performance of the colonel commanding the 106th Regiment of the 27th Division that had fought there. I had had a few unhappy thoughts of my own about that part of the 27th Division which was at Makin. But I told Harry Hill we would just have to learn how the Army fought and support them as best we could.

You will also note, if you read the record carefully, that Colonel Ayers [Russell G.] who commanded the 106th Infantry Regiment at Eniwteok Atoll and again on landing at Saipan was relieved of his command after a couple of days by the Army General [Jarman] who stepped into Ralph Smith's shoes.

One thing I would like to have appear in the record is that when a draft of the Army's history of the Marianas Campaign was made available to me and I read carefully that part of it dealing with the 27th Infantry Division's fighting on the 22nd and 23rd of June, and the chapter on Smith versus Smith, I was very much pleased to find the former quite factual and temperate. Without saying that I agreed with every word in every sentence, I thought the account of the troubles of the 27th Division which led to Ralph Smith's relief well balanced.

However, I could not agree at all with the statement made in a later chapter in discussing the 'Smith versus Smith' controversy that Ray Spruance and I 'jumped into the fight.' To the best of my knowledge Ray Spruance never jumped into any fight during the whole Pacific War, and I think everyone who fought the war with him and knew him will agree. Only someone who

didn't know Ray Spruance and didn't know what really happened would say or write that. That's . . . a lie.

I was invited on many occasions after the war to express opinions for publication in regard to this 'Smith versus Smith' matter. I avoided them like the plague. That's still my policy.

I hope you will find somewhere a despatch which was sent out by me at Saipan saying that no correspondents' stories which compared the fighting merits of Marines and Army troops to the disadvantage of the Army would be released by me.[4]

A paraphrased version of that despatch reads in part:

Vice Admiral Turner has directed that no stories will be released which emphasize the merits of Marines or naval personnel against the Army personnel. . . .[5]

Just for the record, the punch paragraph of the "eyes only" letter of Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson, Jr. U. S. Army, which sought to deny Major General H. M. Smith, USMC, operational command of the Fifth Corps troops is quoted:

It is recommended that:

a. The responsibilities assigned to the headquarters of the Fifth Amphibious Corps be restricted to administrative duties in connection with USMC troops in the Central Pacific Area.

b. When the time arrives for the employment of a tactical corps as such in the Central Pacific Area, both the Corps Headquarters and Corps Troops, combat and service, be furnished by the Army.[6]

As far as this writer could tell, the only thing about the Saipan controversy, which was still capable of raising Admiral Turner's blood pressure in 1960, was Admiral Nimitz's disregard of the letter originated by Vice Admiral Turner and titled: "Reporting unwarranted assumption of command authority by Lieutenant General R. C. Richardson, Jr., USA." [7]

When I asked Fleet Admiral Nimitz about this Smith vs Smith controversy, and about the "eyes only" letter he would not permit me to quote him, although he had plenty to say vigorously off the record. I can say that he

[4] Turner. See Crowl, *Campaign in the Marianas* (Army), Chs. IX and X generally and page 193 in particular.

[5] CTF 51 080924 Jul. 1944 appears in the Endorsement to Encl. (D) Commanding General, 27th Infantry Division to Commanding General USAFPOA, letter, 12 Oct. 1944.

[6] Headquarters Army Forces Central Pacific Area to Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, Pearl Harbor, T.H. (For Eyes of Admiral Nimitz Alone) in memorandum of 27 Dec. 1943, subj: Fifth Amphibious Corps.

[7] (a) CTF 51 to COMFIFTHFLT, Ser 00640, 16 Jul. 1944; (b) COMFIFTHFLT to CINCPAC, letter, Ser 00414 of 18 Jul. 1944.

did direct my attention to a history of 27th Infantry Division and to the part which read:

> On 1 June (1942) an old friend of the Division arrived on Oahu to assume command of the Hawaiian Department. He was Lt. Gen. Robert C. Richardson, Jr., who had commanded VII Corps during the Louisiana-Arkansas maneuvers. During 1942, while on an inspection tour of the Pacific for General Marshall, he had gone out of his way to pay a visit to the Division on Hawaii.[8]

One could infer from this that Fleet Admiral Nimitz believed that Lieutenant General Richardson was more influenced by old friendships than by the facts, when acting in this controversy.

Perhaps Admiral Turner had the Smith versus Smith controversy in the back of his mind when, after the war, he spoke as follows:

> I learned a tremendous amount during World War II—about strategy and tactics and about naval doctrine. I also learned a lot about the technique of warfare, and particularly the technique of naval amphibious warfare.[9]
>
> * * * * *
>
> We found the most important technique of amphibious warfare to be the willingness and ability to cooperate in spite of differences of opinion or viewpoint between individuals, between branches in each Service and between the different Services themselves, including Allied Services. Many different types of tactical elements are involved in amphibious operations. Each type has its own particular use. If they are any good, the men of all those elements believe *they* are the *particular* group who will most contribute to success. Their opinions and efforts must always be considered and appreciated. Conflicts between the different elements (which are inevitable) must be adjusted in order to produce a smooth working team.[10]

SAIPAN OR GUAM FIRST?

It should be mentioned that during the early planning period of FORAGER, the campaign for the Marianas, there was much sentimental pressure for the recapture of Guam prior to the asault on Saipan. However, the very cogent military reason that kept our planners' eyes on target was that if we attacked Saipan first, Japanese reinforcement aircraft, flying out of the homeland or Iwo Jima and down the Marianas chain, would not have the benefit of nearby air bases to land and refuel before or after

[8] (a) Nimitz; (b) Love, p. 22.

[9] Turner.

[10] Turner, Presentation at the Navy General Line School, 5 Dec. 1949.

undertaking battle with our protective air cover. Knowing how temporary putting an airstrip "out of commission" had proven to be, and how fast the Japanese Soldier was with a shovel, it seemed most desirable not to permit the Japanese to use the airstrips on Saipan, even intermittently, to interfere with the large task force essential to recapture Guam.

RECOVERY OF AMERICAN TERRITORY

Vice Admiral Turner spent only three days at Guam during the twenty days of the assault landing operation required for the reconquest. While these were the vital first three days, it is obvious that he left the amphibious operation largely to Commander Southern Attack Force (TF 53), Rear Admiral Conolly, in whom he had great confidence. So only the planning aspects pertaining to the exact day when the assault would be launched, in which Vice Admiral Turner participated, and the general features of the assault landing will be covered.

PLANNING THE GUAM ASSAULT

Most of the detailed planning for the landing operations of the amphibious assault on Guam was done at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands by Rear Admiral R. L. Conolly, Commander Group Three, Fifth Amphibious Force, and by Major General Roy S. Geiger, USMC, Commanding General, Third Amphibious Corps. The Marine Third Division commanded by Major General Alan Turnage, USMC, and the First Provisional Brigade commanded by Brigadier General Lemuel C. Shepherd, USMC, both assigned to the Guam operation, and making up the Third Amphibious Corps, were on Guadalcanal. The assigned attack transports and lesser amphibious craft were at Hollandia, a thousand miles to the westward where they were working for General MacArthur until the last of April, and the majority did not arrive back in the Solomons until about 10 May 1944. This was only three weeks before the sailing dates for Task Force 53 necessarily occurring between the 1st and 4th of June. The *Appalachian* (AGC-1), the only amphibious command ship other than the *Rocky Mount* currently available in the Pacific, flew Rear Admiral Conolly's flag after her arrival in the area from Pearl Harbor on 27 April 1944.

The rehearsals were held 23–27 May in the Tetere—Tassafaronga—Cape

Esperance area of Guadalcanal. After its departure, the task force staged through Kwajalein and Roi in the Marshalls enroute to Guam.

Beginning about 16 June 1944, it was obvious that the Guam assault could not be launched until the Japanese Fleet was beaten off and was out of the Philippine Sea. It was ten days after the initial Saipan landings before the Japanese Fleet had exhausted itself, was in retreat, and the continuance of the FORAGER Operation seemed secure. Until about this same date, 25 June, the doughty Japanese on Saipan had put up such a dogged and, in many ways, skillful defense that both Commander Expeditionary Force and Commander Expeditionary Troops easily agreed that there was a real chance that some of the assault troops for Guam might have to be used on Saipan. So the assault troops for Guam remained afloat and within supporting distance of Saipan.

After the Commander Expeditionary Troops was willing to release part of the Guam assault troops from standby duty at Saipan, Commander Fifth Fleet and his more senior Expeditionary Force officers, conditioned by the rugged Japanese defense on Saipan, decided to wait to launch the assault on Guam until the 77th Infantry Division arrived in the Marianas so as to have a higher ratio of assault troops to Japanese defenders. This decision was reached despite an expressed desire and willingness of Rear Admiral Conolly and Major General Geiger to make the assault prior to this date.

On 25 June, the Northern Attack Group for Guam (TG 53.1) with the Marine Third Division embarked was told off to return to Eniwetok. The Southern Attack Group for Guam (TG 53.2) with the 1st Provisional Brigade embarked remained off Saipan as a Floating Reserve for another week.

On 3 July 1944, Admiral Spruance held a conference of his senior subordinates to try to determine a realistic date for the assault landing on Guam. The date chosen was 25 July.

When Admiral King saw the despatch setting forth the decision and the reasons therefore, he wrote "too late" just above the date. CINCPAC also found the date unacceptable, and the matter was argued out with Commander Fifth Fleet by despatch. In view of these high level negative reactions to 25 July as William Day, the day for the assault landing on Guam, a compromise date of 21 July was advanced by Admiral Spruance. This date stood despite considerable reluctance on the part of Admiral King and Admiral Nimitz. The reason that 21 July was acceptable was because the last two Regimental Combat Teams of the 77th Infantry Division out loaded from

Hawaii could not possibly arrive at Guam before that day. Actually, they arrived on 22 July.

On 6 July, final approval for a William Day of 21 July was received from CINCPAC. As a by-product soon thereafter, the Palau Islands operation in the Carolines, which had a lien on some of the command resources of Amphibious Group Three,—the assault landing force for Guam,—was set for 15 September 1944.[11]

GUAM

The month-long delay in launching the assault held the possibility of creating a number of problems for the amphibians. One of the more worrisome was that July was the month when typhoons were something more than a possibility in the area of the Marianas. Another worry was how well the newly put together crews of the smaller amphibious ships and the on-edge Marines crowded aboard them, would stand up under the long continued suspense and the monotony.

Postponing the assault on Guam from the 18th of June to the 21st of July had its drawbacks, but it also had its great advantages. More troops were available for the initial assault, and much, much more time was available for the destruction of Japanese fixed defenses by both gun and air bombardment. Besides all this:

> A defense plan of Guam dated 25 March was captured on Saipan. This plan contains valuable data on the defenses of that island.[12]

Vice Admiral Turner reported that 37,292 Marines and 19,245 Army troops participated in the assault on Guam. This was about 80 percent as large as the assault force on Saipan. With over 56,000 troops, our assault forces at Guam outnumbered the 18,500 Japanese troops by just better than a 3-to-1 ratio, while on Saipan the ratio had been only somewhat better than 2½-to-1. Consequently, the Guam operation proceeded more rapidly although the island was three times as large as Saipan. Guam was captured in 20 days versus 24 days for Saipan.

[11] (a) COMFIFTHFLT to CINCPOA, 030601, 051425 Jul. 1944; (b) CINCPOA to COMFIFTHFLT 032109, 060236 Jul. 1944.

[12] Brigadier General O. T. Pfeiffer, USMC, Plans Division Staff, Memo for Admiral King, 23 Jun. 1944.

UNANTICIPATED REINFORCEMENTS

While the records indicate that there were an adequate number of Marines assigned to the Guam assault, the War Diary of the LST-227, underway since 31 May 1944, reveals an unplanned-strengthening of the assault troops on 12 June.

> Three Marine stowaways voluntarily gave themselves up, having stowed away in Guadalcanal in order to be present at the invasion of Guam.[13]

JAPANESE TROOP STRENGTH ON GUAM

Way back on 17 May 1944, when Rear Admiral Conolly was publishing his operation plan for the assault on Guam, the Japanese troops on that island were estimated to number 6,900 to 9,300 of which from 2,000 to 2,600 were believed to be construction personnel. It was noted that:

> During April and May the estimated total number of troops on Guam has increased 40%, and it is significant that the increase has been entirely in combat troops and aviation personnel.[14]

As indicated before, the Japanese actually had double the number of the top figure of this intelligence estimate of troops, that is, about 18,500.

Besides 18,500 troops, the Japanese on Guam had the benefit of the presence of Lieutenant General Hideyoshi Obata, Commanding General, 31st Army, as well as Lieutenant General Takeshi Takashima, who was Commanding General, 29th Division, the basic infantry unit assigned to the Guam defense. Lieutenant General Obata who, as previously mentioned, commanded all Japanese Army defense forces in the mandated islands and in the Bonins, had flown back to the Marianas from the Palau Islands after the assault on Saipan had started. Unable to alight on Saipan, he chose Guam and died there.

The Japanese defensive armament on Guam was not massive, but there were 19 Japanese 20cm (8.0″), eight 15cm (5.9″) and twenty-two 12.7cm (4.9″) coast defense guns and approximately 40 heavy and 96 medium anti-aircraft guns to worry the invaders.

[13] LST-227 War Diary, 12 Jun. 1944.

[14] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR GRP Three (CTF 53) Op Plan A162-44, 17 May 1944, Annex A, p. 2.

AN OLD SHIPMATE

Ten days before the assault landings in Guam, a *Saratoga* shipmate of Vice Admiral Turner's, Chief Radioman George R. Tweed, was picked up from a Guam hideout by a destroyer, the *McCall* (DD-400),[15] carrying out a shore bombardment mission. Tweed and four others had ridden away from Agana as the Japanese came into the town in December 1941 and all hid in the bush country. The others were captured and killed but Tweed had survived on Guam all during the Japanese occupation. Vice Admiral Turner sent Tweed a warm welcome message.

THE PHYSICAL FACTS

All of northern Guam is a high plateau, while southern Guam is rough terrain with numerous low mountain peaks. Guam's shore line has a few good-sized coral beaches and many miles of high cliffs.

In addition to the bedrock choice of adequate landing beaches, consideration also had to be given to the barrier reef from 25 yards to 700 yards wide surrounding the greater part of the island. This barrier reef existed off shore from all the good landing beaches, including those chosen.

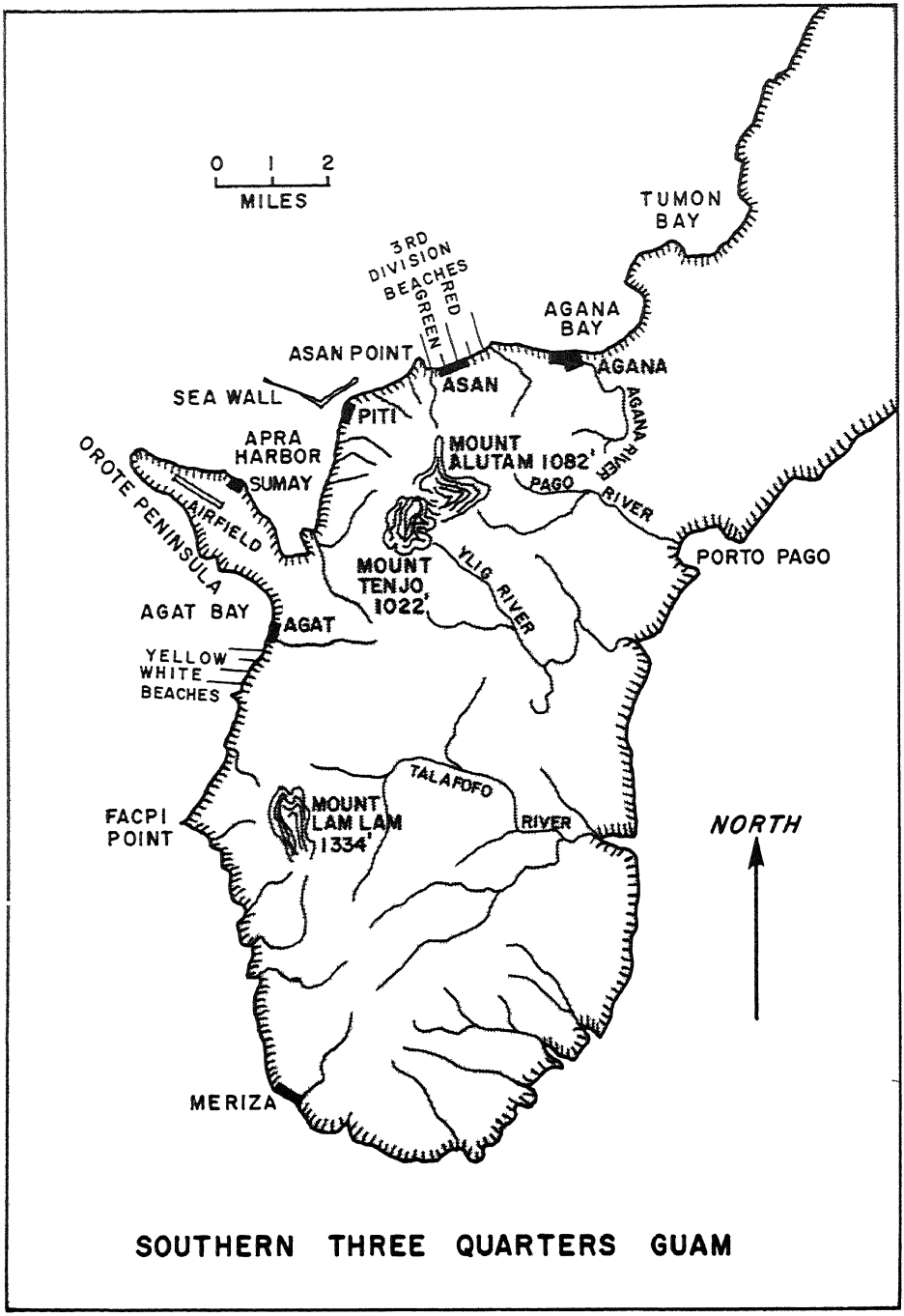
The beaches selected—Asan to the north of Apra Harbor, and Agat across Orote Peninsula to the south from Apra Harbor—were the best. But the Japanese naturally put in their heaviest fixed defenses and grouped their troops to protect them against an assault. The main Japanese defense line ran from Point Amantes marking the north of Tumon Bay south to Point Facpi on the west coast of Guam.

MONOTONY FIRST

For the amphibians, the worst part of the Guam assault was the waiting for it. Having staged through Kwajalein and Roi between 9 and 12 June, Task Force 53, except for the bombardment groups, just circulated in the hot sun for the next two to three weeks, while the Japanese Fleet was being defeated in the Philippine Sea and while the battle for Saipan was being won.

Any ship that did anything else but slither through the hot salt water made a record of it. For example:

[15] CTF 51 to COMFIFTHFLT, 111306 Jul. 1944.



Southern Guam.

> On 12 June the SC-1326 hit a large fish with her sound projector, bending the shaft, destroying the dome and starting hull leaks which were finally stopped by the ship's force. The sound dome was rendered completely inoperative.[16]

As one LST Group Commander logged it, upon arriving in Eniwetok the day after the Fourth of July, 1944:

> This trip which ended up in Eniwetok instead of Guam was probably one of the longest endurance runs of a Tractor Group (LSTs) with troops aboard and otherwise combat loaded and without replenishment of supplies and fresh water, on record.
>
> * * * * *
>
> During the 26-day period at sea (9 June to 5 July) material breakdowns, although numerous, for the most part, were minor and of short duration. . . .
>
> * * * * *
>
> The days underway were very hot and filled with uncertainty, bogies, snoopers, shadowers, one enemy torpedo plane attack on our group and one on adjacent group, Group Three. . . .[17]

LST-278 noted in her War Diary that she had 456 personnel on board when sailing from Eniwetok. One hundred seventeen were in the ship's company. To make her particularly unhappy when enemy planes were around, she also had 100 drums of gasoline and 70 tons of assault ammunition, mostly stowed topside.

While the Guam invasion force circled for days in the hot and sultry approach area, there was an adequate ration of Japanese air attacks to make up for an absence on the smaller amphibious ships of drone targets to improve their gunnery. One LST logged its experiences:

> A fourth plane circled to the rear of the formation and came in low at about fifty feet bearing about 175° relative to the [LST] 227. All the guns that could bear opened at about 4000 yards. Wisps of smoke appeared when about 2000 yards distant on its wing and engine cowling. The plane then turned, all our guns still firing with hits observed, and flew toward the starboard quarter of the LST formation and fell into the sea with an increase of smoke and flames appearing. . . . Other LSTs were firing as well, so that a dispute no doubt would develop as to who got the plane.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Observed the DD *Stemble* sink the LCI(G)-468 which was hit by an enemy plane during yesterday's attack and badly disabled.[18]

[16] COMLSTGRP 38, Report of Tractor Group Four in Guam Operations, 1 Sep. 1944, p. 4.
[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.
[18] LST-227 War Diary, 15 and 18 Jun. 1944

DARING THE JAPANESE TO STOP US

The month-long air and gun bombardments against Guam by and large were concentrated on the primary Japanese defense zone on the western side of the island between Tumon Bay and Point Facpi. There could be no doubt by the Japanese defenders, as to the general area of our assault landing. This was particularly so because, in addition to the bombardments, the underwater demolition teams for days conducted gunfire-protected demolition operations to clear the chosen beaches of natural and artificial obstacles to our landing craft.

As Rear Admiral Ainsworth, Commander Cruiser Division Nine, wrote:

> We had tipped off our hand. . . . Nothing short of an engraved diagram could have told the enemy more clearly that our photographic reconnaissance had been good, that we had pin-pointed the locations of his principal batteries and installations, and that our probable intentions were to land just about where we did.[19]

Captured Japanese documents indicated that this judgment was excellent,

[19] CTG 53.5 FORAGER Report, Part V, p. 12.



Turner Collection

Coral-filled log cribs found off Agana.

since immediately after the shelling the Japanese commander radically changed his defensive plan from a four sector defense designed to meet an assault on Guam initiated from any beach area to a plan to repel an invasion launched against the Agana Bay—Agat Beach area.[20]

Preliminary gun bombardments of Guam were carried out on 16, 27, and 30 June. Beginning 8 July 1944, Guam received daily heavy air and gun bombardments steadily increasing as additional air or gun bombardment units arrived from the Saipan area. Rear Admiral Conolly arrived at Guam on 14 July and for the week prior to the landing personally coordinated the air and gun bombardment, and supervised the clearing of the beaches.

UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAMS

At the time of FORAGER the Underwater Demolition Teams work was divided into two phases. Phase I was the reconnaissance of the approaches to a beach and the removal, insofar as practical, of all obstacles in the approaches. Phase II was the post-assault work of blasting channels and constructing ramps to the beaches.

Prior to Saipan, the UDTs had been reorganized, expanded and well trained for their dangerous but essential chores. They effectively explored the ever present barrier reefs guarding each landing beach in FORAGER and removed obstacles.

The following extracts from the Action Report of UDT Three detail their work during a small part of Phase I at Guam:

> 17 July 1944
>
> 1945: Started approach for night operations to remove antiboat obstacles on landing beaches at Asan. Orders were to remove obstacles close to shore first. Operation delayed due to grounding of LCI-348 on reef. After attempts to remove LCI, which was taken under heavy mortar fire by enemy, it was decided to abandon it and crew was removed by UDT #3's, Boat No. 4.
>
> * * * * *
>
> 18 July 1944
>
> 0100: Delayed operations to remove obstacles started. Platoons 1 and 3 failed to locate obstacles assigned them. Platoons 2 and 4 removed 60 obstacles each from Blue, Red 2 and Green Beaches. Mortar fire from DDs. Result 120 obstacles removed; used 2400 pounds Tetrytol.
>
> * * * * *

[20] CTF 56 FORAGER Report, Encl. (D), G-2 Report, p. 17.

1400: 3 LCPRs sent to reef edge under heavy fire cover and smoke screen, and launched 5 rubber boats. 150 obstacles removed, using 3000 pounds Tetrytol.

The edge of the reef, contrary to what was indicated by aerial reconnaissance, did not break off sharply, but had a gradual slope from 18″ of water at edge of reef to about 6′ of water, 100 feet from edge of reef. . . . The enemy had placed obstacles in an almost continuous front along the reef. . . . These obstacles were piles of coral rock inside a wire frame made of heavy wire net. . . . They were 3 to 5 feet in diameter, 3 to 4 feet high and 5 to 8 feet apart. . . .

* * * * *

21 July 1944. [William Day]

0730: Dispatched all UDT Boats to respective beaches to guide LCMs and LCTs with tanks ashore and over reef.

* * * * *

0925: All tanks landed safely. . . . The intensity and accuracy of fire cover during the two days prior to W-Day were amazing, considering the fact that while demolition personnel were working within 50 yards of the beach, the beach itself was covered with fire from LCIs, destroyers, cruisers, and also from bombing and strafing planes. . . .[21]

THE ASSAULT LANDINGS

William Day, the day for the assault landings on Guam, was 21 July 1944. How Hour, the time the first assault wave was to hit the beach, was 0830. The objectives were along an eight-mile stretch of the coast in the vicinity of Apra Harbor which included the series of four villages of Asan, Piti, Sumay and Agat.

The Third Marine Division landed at Asan north of Apra Harbor. The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade landed at the Agat beaches south of Orote Peninsula and three miles south of Apra Harbor.

All assault waves were in amtracs. The lead waves hit the beach on schedule. The initial assault waves on the southern beaches at Agat received light mortar fire. As the third and fourth waves landed at the northern Asan beaches, enemy mortar fire commenced on the reef and beach areas. As soon as the troops were out of the amtracs at both beaches, the amtracs were used to shuttle to the beaches logistic support brought to the outer edge of the fringing reef by LCVPs since ordinary landing craft could not cross the shallow reefs. LCTs soon augmented the LCVPs and LVTs.

[21] Commander UDT Three Action Report, 18 Aug. 1944.



Turner Collection

Wire fence roll obstructions partially filled with coral and further anchored with coconut logs off Agana.

Once ashore both assaults were met by the usual stubborn to fanatical Japanese defense.

Unloading proceeded slowly at first on the northern beaches due to the beaches being brought under intermittent fire from mortars and light artillery. But by July 24th, LSTs were discharging logistic support directly on to pontoon piers in both attack areas.[22]

THE ESSENTIAL CORPS RESERVE

Temporary Transport Division 38 which carried the 77th Infantry Division to Guam was a hastily assembled division, put together at Pearl Harbor when the emergency requirement arose for immediately moving the 77th Infantry Division. The experience of the *Alshain* (AKA-55), commissioned on 1 April 1944, was typical. As reported in her ship history:

[22] (a) COMTRANSDIV Eight, Comments, Observations, and Recommendations—Guam Operation, 20 Aug. 1944; (b) COMLSTGRP 38, Report of Tractor Group Four, 1 Sep. 1944.



Turner Collection

Barbed wire entanglement at Agana.

After a short period of fitting out, she proceeded to Chesapeake Bay for shakedown and training and then to the Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Va., for post-shakedown availability. She then . . . proceeded to Pearl Harbor, reporting for duty to the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, on May 19, 1944.

The ship was first assigned as an Amphibious Training Ship at San Diego, but just before she reached the West Coast, she received orders to replenish fuel and provisions and return to Pearl Harbor at best speed. Upon her arrival at Pearl Harbor, the *Alshain* was assigned to temporary Transport Division 38 (Captain J. B. Heffernan, USN, in *USS Lamar,* APA-47) and commenced loading combat cargo of the 305th Regimental Combat Team of the 77th Infantry Division for the forthcoming invasion of Guam.

The *Alpine* (APA-92), another ship in the division, was not even commissioned until 22 April 1944. Nine weeks later she also was loading troops for Guam.

It was a minor miracle, in addition to indicating the soundness of the basic amphibious manuals, that the ships of this division turned in such satisfactory performances.

Unloading of RCT-306 and RCT-307 of the 77th Infantry from the

Transport Group carrying the Corps Reserve took place on William Day plus two on the White Beaches at Agat. One report noted:

> During this period, two regiments of infantry were landed by wading over the reef; all the 77th Division Artillery were put ashore from LSTs and transports. Headquarters and miscellaneous troops waded over the reef and approximately 12,000 long tons of vehicles and cargo were unloaded over the reef and placed ashore.[23]

Rubber boats and DUKWs had to be used for this unloading since no LVTs were available to the ships landing the 77th until William plus seven. Two XAKs in the hodgepodge of ships used to ferry the 77th Infantry Division to Guam did not even carry landing boats.

The reefs off the beaches of Guam created problems for all the amphibians. Thus:

> Generally speaking all cargo, except wheeled vehicles, had to be manhandled, towed, floated, pushed, paddled or carried in amphibious vehicles (when available) over 500 to 700 yards of reef to the beach. . . .
>
> * * * * *
>
> Beach parties could more properly be called *reef* parties in this operation since the reef was where the beach parties were set up. They worked from life rafts, floats, in the water and generally all over the reef keeping things moving. . . . This was truly an amphibious operation, almost a submarine one in fact. Officers and men of these parties became 'water rats' and half submerged stevedores.[24]
>
> The almost total lack of anchorage in the Agat area made it necessary to keep the transports and merchant ships hove to during day within the antisubmarine screen and to retire them at night by groups. At times there were from 20 to 30 large ships concentrated in this Transport Area, the tactical control of which was a daily problem, complicated by lack of adequate voice communication facilities on the increasing number of merchant ships.[25]

Japanese counterattacks during the first week of the Guam assault were strong. During one on the Asan beaches as late as 26 July, infiltrators reportedly reached the beach area.

Advance in the northern sector by the Third Marine Division was slow. In the southern landing area, Orote Peninsula was captured on 29 July. On the 31st, the push across to the east coast of Guam by the combined efforts of all the troops commenced. By 1 August, Port Pago on the east coast of

[23] CTG 53.19, Action Report, 7 Aug. 1944, pp. 23–24.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 27.

[25] CTG 53.2 Commander Southern Attack Group, Agat, Guam, Action Report, 29 Aug. 1944, p. 7.

Guam had been reached, and by 9 August, Point Ritidian at the northern end of the island was taken.

DIVIDENDS FROM LYING LOW

Beginning on 10 July, until after the first asault waves had beached on 21 July, the Japanese on Guam fired neither coast defense guns nor anti-aircraft guns. This permitted our air bombardment to be conducted far more accurately, but it also led to a false sense of security by the smaller amphibious ships.

Some of the LSTs recorded narrow escapes from Japanese gunfire long after the first troops had gone ashore on 21 July:

> After the first two shots which bracketed the LST-227, the enemy gunfire was directed at the LST-481 on our starboard quarter. Numerous hits were observed. The LSTs 227 and 481 immediately made smoke and got underway dragging anchor. The LST-481 burning forward of the superstructure deck passed close aboard and cut in front of the bow of the LST-227. . . .
>
> * * * * *
>
> At 1639 retracted amid increasing enemy mortar fire and steamed out to transport area, empty of cargo and greatly relieved after unloading a cargo of gasoline and ammunition under intermittent enemy fire for three days, with no hits scored.[26]

LST-267 reported:

> This vessel designated to lay off beachhead and act as Hot Cargo Ship. . . . Laying off beachhead at 2500 yards. Ship numbers being illuminated, we drew gunfire. Hauled out 1000 yards and turned out landward lights. Shells landed from 10 to 75 yards from ship.[27]

The smaller amphibious craft drew considerable attention from the Japanese artillery. Three LCIGs, two LSTs and one SC were hit, with a total of 15 killed and 50 wounded.[28]

In addition to concern over enemy gunfire, there were also worries over poor holding ground off the beaches. LST-227 noted:

> During the entire time at Agat, great difficulty was experienced by the anchor not holding on the hard coral bottom.[29]

[26] LST-227 War Diary, 24 and 26 Jul. 1944.
[27] LST-267 War Diary, 25 Jul. 1944.
[28] CTG 53.2 Action Report, 29 Aug. 1944.
[29] LST-227 War Diary, 23 Jul. 1944.

THE GUAM BEACHES

When it was all over, Guam's beaches (Agat and Asan) were judged to be less suited for unloading than those at Saipan, primarily because:

1. There were no natural passages through the fringing reef for use by landing boats.
2. The barrier reef was far distant from the beach (200 to 500 yards).
3. The water over the barrier reef at Agat was too deep for trucks to be launched there from landing craft and then keep moving to the beach under their own power, even at low tide.

Dadi Beach, located between Agat Beach and Orote Peninsula, was used for unloading after Orote Peninsula was well in hand (28 July 1944), and the danger from a flank assault removed.

THE BATTLE IS OVER

Organized Japanese resistance was declared ended on Guam on 10 August 1944. Vice Admiral Turner returned to Guam on 13 August, by which date Rear Admiral Conolly had been relieved by Rear Admiral Reifsnider and departed for his chores at Yap and Ulithi in the Palau operation. At noon on 15 August, two months after arriving at Saipan to initiate the assault landings of FORAGER, Vice Admiral Turner in the *Rocky Mount* got underway for Pearl Harbor, arriving there on 26 August 1944.

In the next month after Vice Admiral Turner's departure from Guam, nearly 5,000 Japanese were rooted out of canyons and caves. A few in scarce incidents surrendered, but mostly they fought to the bitter end. Between 15 September and 15 November 1944, the enemy still refusing to yield to fervent pleas to surrender in the face of greatly superior force, another 1,600 Japanese committed suicide or had to be killed.

As Admiral Nimitz wrote:

> The enemy met the assault operations with pointless bravery, inhuman tenacity, infiltration, cave fighting and the will to lose hard.[30]

Throughout the assault period and during the cleanup action, the gunboat LCIs rendered yeoman service, not only shooting into caves and other hiding places, but ferrying Marines from here to there as they sought out the remainder Japanese.

[30] CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Monthly Operations Report, July 44, p. 37.

THE WEATHER DETERIORATES

Before the island had been secured, there was a period of uncertain weather at Guam. Vice Admiral Turner's report included this entry:

> On July 30, as a result of a disturbance forming near Guam, and developing rapidly to the west of Saipan, heavy swells from westerly directions built up, lasting through August 4. . . .[31]

During this period, 29 July through 4 August 1944, heavy weather made unloading very difficult and at times brought it virtually to a standstill.

NAVAL GUNFIRE SUPPORT—GUAM

There were no complaints about the naval gunfire support at Guam. Major General Geiger, USMC, Commander Third Amphibious Corps, sent this fine message to the Navy's gunners:

> The capture of the island of Guam has ended the naval gunfire requirements of the Landing Force. I wish to express to you, your fire support unit commanders, and the firing ships themselves my appreciation for continuous and effective support rendered. The enemy was never able to rally from the initial bombardment and the continual gunfire support kept him in a state of confusion to the end of the campaign. Naval gunfire contributed largely in keeping losses of the Landing Forces to a minimum and in bringing the Guam Campaign to an early and successful close. It is believed that this campaign has set a new mark for the employment of the fire power of our ships and it is hoped that in future operations of this force, naval gunfire may do as much for us.
>
> The positions where we landed were heavily fortified with everything except beach and reef mines. Our naval gunfire and air bombardments were so effective that scarcely a shot was fired at our first four LVT waves until after they were on the beach. At least half of the total amount of fixed defenses were destroyed, and more than that in the vicinity of the landing. Probably 80% of the troops defending the beach either were killed or retreated to other positions.[32]

Two personal letters from Vice Admiral Turner during FORAGER touched on naval gunfire support. The first referred particularly to Saipan and the second to FORAGER as a whole.

> The demands of the troops for support by naval gunfire after the landing had been successful, have been far greater than we expected. Fortunately, the

[31] COMPHIBFOR FORAGER Report, Annex 4 to Encl. (B), p 2.
[32] COMTHIRDPHIBCORPS to CTF 53, 101413 Aug. 1944.



Turner Collection

Japanese 20-centimeter anti-boat battery located on Bangi Point.

reserve supplies have been adequate, but we must raise our sights on this item. . . .[33]

We all feel that naval gunnery and air gunnery improved considerably during this operation.[34]

NOTABLE FEATURES OF GUAM ASSAULT

Various aspects of the Guam operation impressed the amphibians who fought throughout the twenty-day assault. One of the more junior participants recorded an observation that was echoed by his seniors:

> The outstanding feature of the operation with the exception of the assault phase, was the excellent performance of the LST's, loaded down with troops, and the small craft in company, maintaining themselves at sea for twenty-six continuous days without suffering critically in material or morale or health of troops and crews.[35]

[33] RKT to CWN, letter, 5 Jul. 1944, Enclosure, p. 2.

[34] RKT to Commodore W. B. Phillips, Commander Administrative Command Amphibious Forces, Pacific, letter, 1 Aug. 1944, para 8.

[35] COMLSTGRP 38, Report of Tractor Group Four, 1 Sep. 1944, p. 10.

Others thought the assault landing on Guam was notable because:

1. Not a single piece of enemy artillery was brought to bear on the transports, or the first of the assault waves.
2. Fighter aircraft armed with rockets took over much of the bombing previously allocated to dive bombers. (SB2Cs).
3. The Underwater Demolition Teams, aided by heavy protective fire, were able to undertake three days and three nights of large scale demolition of natural and artificial obstacles. In this connection Commander Southern Attack Force reported: "Landings could not have been made on either north or south beaches nor any other suitable beaches without these elaborate but successfully prosecuted clearance operations."
4. The air bombardment was the heaviest of the war because all four of the fast carrier task groups as well as twenty-four jeep carriers were available to conduct it in the days immediately before and after the assault landings.
5. The logistic support landed during the first four days of the assault averaged 10,000 tons.
6. All landing craft had to be unloaded at the outer edge of the reef.[36]

The amphibians were not pestered with Japanese air, submarine, or surface fleet attacks which was another reason all went well within Task Force 53.

As Rear Admiral Conolly, with real euphoria, wrote when the operation was all over:

> The Naval Forces were filled with the conviction that nothing was to be spared to land successfully and to support effectively the fine troops that were to assault and capture the island objective.[37]

CINCPAC's victory message after the reconquest of Guam was completed said this:

> Operation was brilliantly and valorously conducted and resulted in the recovery of important American Territory and the Liberation of a loyal people. Well Done.

TINIAN

The Tinian amphibious assault is principally noteworthy for the first use of the napalm flame bomb and for the long and bitter discussion which

[36] Compiled from CTF 51, CTF 52, CTF 53, CTG 52.2, Reports of Guam Operations.
[37] CTF 53, FORAGER Report, p. 15.

preceded the drafting of the final plans for the assault. The professional argument concerned which beaches should be used.

Both the early and final plans called for a 'shore to shore' amphibious movement in part, rather than a simon pure 'ship to shore' amphibious movement, since the two Marine Divisions who would conduct the assault landing were those that had fought on Saipan and were on Saipan. This meant that somewhat more than one division was to be out-lifted from Saipan directly to Tinian in LCIs, in landing boats, or in amtracs and DUKWs carried aboard LSTs and LCTs.

THE UNITED STATES COMMANDERS

Vice Admiral Turner set the style in utilizing the great competence of available subordinates. Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill was handed the ball for Tinian and told to run with it. This, as Commander Northern Attack Force and Commander Task Force 52, he did to the satisfaction of Vice Admiral Turner. Not to be outdone, Lieutenant General H. M. Smith, USMC, in due time, passed command of the Northern Troops and Landing Force to Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC, who had commanded the Fourth Marine Division during the capture of Saipan. Major General Clifton B. Cates was assigned to command the Fourth Division and the Second Marine Division continued under the command of Major General Thomas E. Watson.

The naval forces participating in the Tinian assault, by and large, were those that had assaulted Saipan, except for the large attack transports and attack cargo ships which had left the Marianas and returned at best speed to Pearl Harbor to embark the 77th Infantry Division and their impedimenta for the delayed Guam assault.

Rear Admiral Hill recalls that he received advance notice of his new chore on 2 July 1944, and despatch orders on 5 July.[38] On 6 July, Commander Saipan Island relieved Rear Admiral Hill of the task of unloading all ships off Saipan, thus relieving him of one of his major tasks, which had kept him busy as a cat on a hot tin roof since 15 June.

As an indication of how the Tinian assault was completely in the hands of Rear Admiral Hill, it is noted here that Vice Admiral Turner was at Guam in the *Rocky Mount* when the Tinian assault was actually launched.

[38] Hill Memo of 17 Nov. 1966. Hereafter Hill Memo.

He had left Saipan in time to join Rear Admiral Conolly in the Northern Transport Area for the assault landing on Guam on 21 July 1944. He stayed at Guam until after the first assault landing had been made on Tinian on 24 July, arriving back at Saipan the next day.

Even after Vice Admiral Turner's return to the Tinian—Saipan area, Rear Admiral Hill "retained the responsibility for offensive and defensive surface and air action in this area." [39]

THE JAPANESE COMMANDERS

On the day before the landing, Vice Admiral Turner's staff recorded:

> Based on data obtained from captured documents, and upon POW interrogations, it is estimated that enemy combat strength on Tinian is about 9,000, exclusive of approximately 9,000 Home Guards.[40]

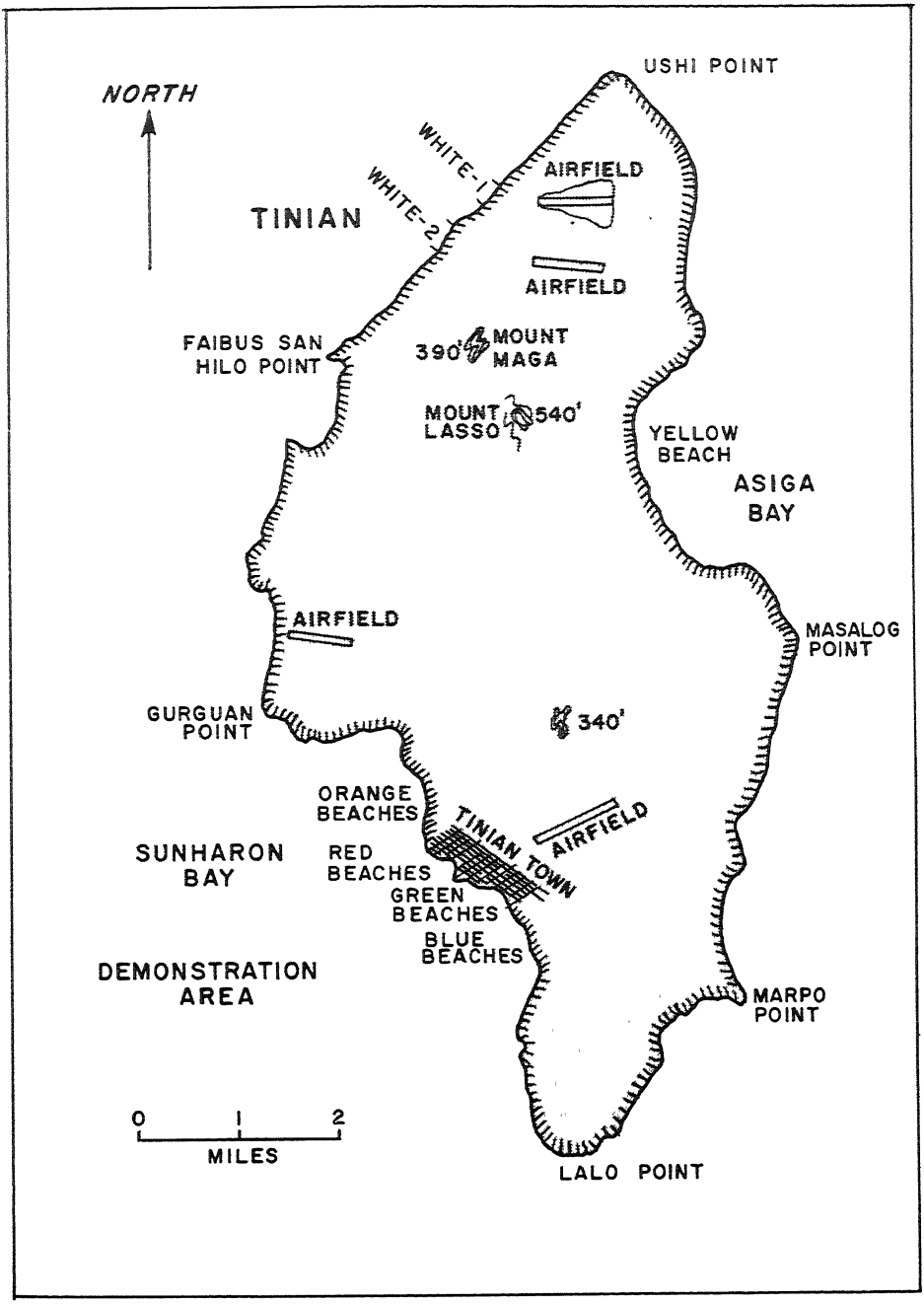
The Headquarters of the Japanese First Air Fleet was on Tinian and its commander, Vice Admiral Kakuji Kakuda, was among those on the island when we landed on 24 July 1944. He had tried on several successive nights to keep a rendezvous with a rescue submarine but his rubber boat never located the submarine. Colonel Kiyochi Ogato commanded the Japanese Army's 50th Regiment. Captain Goichi Oya, IJN, commanded the Japanese Navy's 56th Guard Force. These two backbone units of the 9,000-man Tinian Defense Force were about equally matched in personnel strength. Colonel Ogata was the over-all commander.

The 56th Naval Guard Force manned the three 6-inch coast defense guns of British manufacture, as well as the ten 14-centimeter (5.5″) coast defense guns, the ten 12-centimeter (4.6″) dual-purpose guns and the four 76-millimeter (3.0″) dual-purpose guns collectively protecting the island from sea or air assault.

A FEW MORE PHYSICAL FACTS

In comparison with Saipan and Guam, Tinian Island was fairly flat and fairly open. It was mainly given over to the cultivation of sugar cane. Aerial photographs of the island looked like a giant checkerboard stilted upwards by coral cliffs rising directly from the ocean, except in the area around Tinian

[39] COMPHIBSPAC (CTF 51) FORAGER Report, Encl. (A), p. 19.
[40] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 23 Jul. 1944.



Tinian Island.

town. This stilting was unfortunate from an amphibious assault point of view, since the cliffs were roughly from ten to one hundred feet high. In general, the east coast of Tinian was more rugged than the west coast.

SELECTING THE LANDING BEACHES

There were only three possible landing areas on Tinian: Sunharon Bay on the southwest coast, Asiga Bay on the east central coast, and the White Beach area in northwest Tinian. White Beach One and White Beach Two in northwest Tinian were about 1000 yards apart.

In Sunharon Bay there were four landing areas which had been designated for planning purposes: Orange, Red, Green, and Blue. Red and Green each had two beaches. Blue Beach, a mile south of the piers in Tinian Town, was 600 yards long. Green Beach One, in the center of Tinian Town and between the only two piers, was 600 yards long. Green Beach Two at the southern end of Tinian Town was 400 yards long. Red Beach One and Red Beach Two north of the piers totaled 825 yards. Orange Beach was half a mile north of Red Beach One and 340 yards long.

In Asiga Bay Yellow Beach One was 355 yards long and Yellow Beach Two, 200 yards long. Cliffs flanked both the Yellow beaches and heavy surf pounded them whenever the wind was from the east.

The northeast trades were prevailing in July 1944.

All four of the beaches in Sunharon Bay had something to recommend them even though the two best ones and the closest to Tinian Town piers were something less than excellent.

Admiral Turner wrote of these beaches (Red and Green):

> The actual beaches with practicable exits for vehicles were rather short and scattered; the reefs in many respects were even worse than those at Saipan, and the high flanking artillery positions at both ends were threatening indeed. This beach [area] however, had two very definite advantages; 1st, it did not have the extensive swamp and wide low land back of it that had proved so troublesome at Saipan, but the land rise from the beach was short, and 2nd, once a beachhead had been gained, there was quite a good small craft harbor with a narrow entrance, and behind a very shallow protective reef that would have permitted unloading in all but seriously heavy weather.[41]

The Japanese were fully aware that the beaches off Tinian Town were inviting. Our aerial reconnaissance showed they were making real last-minute

[41] RKT to Commandant, Marine Corps, letter, 6 Nov. 1950, p. 8.

efforts to improve their defensive stance in this and the Yellow Beach area. Further:

> A captured order of the Tinian Garrison Force dated 1900 25 June . . . indicated that our attack was anticipated at Tinian Town and Asiga Bay area.[42]

This captured order was only one of the intelligence nuggets dug out of documents extensive enough to fill 75 mail bags and 54 crates which were garnered during the Saipan operation.

That the Japanese expected our assault to touch down at Tinian Town or just possibly at Asiga Bay was a good reason for not making it at either of these locations. But the alternatives were something less than an amphibian's dream beach.

THE ALTERNATIVES

White Beach One was almost directly west of the main runway of Ushi Point airfield and about six miles due north of Tinian Town. The fringing reef was of dead coral about 75 yards wide. At the seaward end of the reef the water was 3½ feet deep at high tide. The reef bared itself at low tide.

White Beach One was only 65 to 75 yards long and 15 to 20 yards deep. But the relatively smooth off-lying reef shelf was about 300 yards long and it was believed that LVTs and LCVPs could land troops right on this reef shelf and they could wade ashore to the small smooth sand beach area.

There was a narrow, rough road leading from the southern end of White Beach One toward the Ushi Point airfield. However, movement up and out the exits from the beach to the plateau on which the airfield had been built was generally difficult due to boulders, a steep rise, and heavy brush. There were some horned mines off the beach, but it was discovered that these were largely inoperative.

White Beach Two was wider than White Beach One. As Rear Admiral Hill described this beach in his attack order:

> The beach is 15–17 yards in width, 200 yards long, and sandy and smooth except for a few scattered rocks. . . . On the left northern part is a ledge of dead coral about 2½ feet high, which could be easily taken out by a bulldozer tank or tetrytol charges. It is believed that with the aid of demolition and a bulldozer tank, 200 yards of beach can be made available for a landing. . . .

[42] CTF 56 FORAGER Report, 25 Jul. 1944, Vol. 7, Encl. (G-2).

However, at White Beach One:

> A narrow rough road leads from the southern end of the beach toward the airfields.[43]

White Beach Two had two rows of mines offshore and box mines covered the exits.

THE PLANNING FOR WHITE BEACH LANDINGS

Less than seven years after the assault landing on the White Beach areas on Tinian, Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill wrote in regard to his own planning effort and that of other commands involved in the task of capturing Tinian:

> If there were plans, and I presume there were some tentative ones, none of them were available to me or my staff. We started from the beginning and after our study of all possible landing places came to a completely independent conclusion that the two small northwest beaches were the best places to land from the naval point of view provided the approaches to them were not too bad.[44]

Admiral Hill's recollections in 1966 were:

> As my staff began its study of Tinian and its beaches, all they had to go on was Turner's conclusion that we must land at Tinian Town and Holland Smith's hope that we could land on the northern beaches. The responsibility was mine alone, subject to Turner's approval.[45]

The two big advantages for the northwest beaches which everyone immediately recognized were that they were within range of direct artillery support from Saipan, and that they were on the lea side of Tinian.

The tremendous disadvantages, which were weighed differently by each commander, were their extremely small frontage and their narrow steep exits. Previous experience had been that a division commander with troops to land generally started looking for a beach a mile or more long with many exits. He started getting unhappy if there were only 1,000 yards of beach and two good exits, and was really jumping up and down if the beach area narrowed below 500 yards and had only one good exit.

Both Major General Schmidt and Rear Admiral Hill and their staffs were convinced that the White Beaches were usable. To obtain the essential approval of Commander Expeditionary Force that preliminary planning be

[43] COMPHIBSPACGRP Two (CTF 52) Attack Order A112–44, Annex G, p. G-5, G-4.
[44] Vice Admiral Hill to Commandant Marine Corps, letter, 16 Jan. 1951.
[45] Hill Memo, 17 Nov. 1966.

undertaken while reconnaissance by Marines and UDTs went forward, Rear Admiral Hill visited Vice Admiral Turners' flagship. He tells his story:

> The next day I went to Turner to give him this data and to outline our views in regard to using the White beaches. To my consternation and dismay, he was adamantly opposed to even thinking of the White beaches, and gave me positive orders to stop all planning for such a landing.
>
> It was a very explosive conference and placed me in a most embarrassing situation.
>
> In vain I tried to convince him that, pending report of reconnaissance, we should explore the possibilities of those beaches along with the others. I returned to the *Cambria* in a state of perplexity. Here I was, charged with the sole responsibility of planning, but ordered to prepare a plan that neither I nor Harry Schmidt liked. I could fully appreciate Turner's fear of trying to use these little handkerchief sized beaches, but realized that we had considered all angles of the problems much more fully than he had. Yet he was a man of such proven wisdom and judgment that it created many doubts in my mind as to the correctness of my thinking. On the long boat ride back to the *Cambria,* I came to the conclusion that despite his decision, we should explore further the feasibility of the White Beach plan. So I split my staff into two groups, one to work on the White Beach plan, and one to develop the Tinian Town plan—with a view to delaying the final decision.
>
> To assist in the planning, I requested Captain [Armand] Robertson, who would be my LST Squadron Commander, to temporarily transfer to the *Cambria.* He was a very capable and experienced officer, and his timely recommendations and thorough planning proved to be a most valuable contribution to the success of the operation.[46]

One of the controlling factors to be considered in the planning was how great the logistic support build-up for the Landing Force had to be, and that depended on how quickly the island could be captured. Major General Schmidt estimated eight days would be required.

RECONNAISSANCE

On the nights of 10–11 July and 11–12 July 1944, personnel from the Underwater Demolition Teams and from the Marine Reconnaissance Battalion took a "look-see" at the White and Yellow Beaches.

What they found in the Yellow Beach area was enough for a permanent thumbs down on using these beaches. The report stated there were moored

[46] Hill Memo.

mines, pot holes, large boulders, barbed wire on the beaches, and the sound of construction activity just inland. The report was most unfavorable.[47]

Of the west coast beaches, only White Beach One was examined the first night, because the reconnaissance teams did not touch down on White Beach Two, having been swept north of it by the strong inshore current. The report on White Beach One and its approaches was favorable.

The next night (11–12 July) the reconnaissance teams returned to their chores and this night made a close examination of White Beach Two. This beach was poor but usable. The reconnaissance personnel thought that fissures along the outer edge of the underwater reef shelf might be a hazard to amtracs at low tide. A quite real shore-side hazard was a string of land mines flanking the desired landing area.

With this information at hand and digested, Rear Admiral Hill returned to the *Rocky Mount,* hoping to receive a "go ahead" signal from the big boss. He had no such luck.

> He simply would not listen, and again ordered me in very positive terms to stop all White Beach planning and to issue my plan for the Tinian Town landing, which had already been prepared.
>
> Instead of returning to *Cambria,* I went ashore and explained the situation to Holland Smith, who had always been in favor of the White beaches if we could make a workable plan. Then I went to see Spruance. To him I outlined my plan, its many advantages over any other landing point, and told him of my two discussions with Turner. Spruance liked the boldness and surprise element of the plan as outlined. He said he would call a conference—I think for the same afternoon—to settle the matter.
>
> At the conference were Holland Smith, Harry Schmidt, Watson, Hill and Turner. There was a full and frank discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each plan, and then Spruance called for a vote. [Starting with the junior] Four affirmative votes were cast for the White Beach plan, and then he turned to Turner. I held my breath, but Turner quietly said that he also approved it. What a great relief that was for us all.[48]

In this connection, the memory of a somewhat younger man is also recorded:

> During the Saipan-Tinian Operation, I was Operations Officer for the Landing Force [Lieutenant General Smith] and we ran head on into Admiral Turner in planning for Tinian. Admiral Turner wanted to land on the good beaches (strongly defended) at Tinian Town. The Landing Force wished to

[47] CGFIFTHPHIBCORPS FORAGER Report, Vol. I, 12 Aug. 1944, Encl. (L), Report of Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion, 11 Jul. 1944.

[48] Hill Memo. (The conference was held 12 July 1944.)

land on the narrow and very poor beaches (relatively undefended) near the north end of Tinian. The latter beaches could be dominated by our ready placed artillery on the south coast of Saipan, and we were convinced we could negotiate the beaches as a result of our UDT and beach reconnaissance. But Admiral Turner would not give in.

On the last possible day of decision General Holland Smith, his C/S, his G-2, and I went out from Saipan to Admiral Turner's flagship expecting a knock down fight. We were prepared to press our plan in great detail and in the strongest terms. As soon as our plan was stated in outline, Admiral Turner turned to General Smith and said: 'I can support your plan, I approve.' [49]

General Hogaboom added to this scribe:

I think Admiral Turner was very concerned over the logistic support phases of the operation, and as soon as the very special arrangements which we had made had been detailed to him, he became convinced of the practicability of using the White Beaches and approved.

Admiral Spruance's remembrance of this important conference is that:

He refrained from giving his decision until all had presented their views and was relieved of what would have been the disagreeable necessity of overruling trusted Kelly Turner, when the latter agreed to make the decision unanimous for the White beaches.[50]

Admiral Turner's remembrance of the controversy was mellow. In 1950, he wrote:

I merely insisted that full study and consideration be given, before decision, to all possible landing places . . . all of them difficult for more than one reason. And, in accordance with an invariable custom, I refused to give a decision until such studies had been made, and also until the main feature of the landing plan had been developed.[51]

Admiral Hill in 1967 added:

I never saw Kelly when he was so mean and cantankerous as on these two occasions. It just wasn't like him. He must have been a bit under the weather, although I didn't detect it at the time.[52]

In any case there were twelve days between the taking of the final decision as to beaches and the actual assault, and this allowed ten days of full speed ahead preparation.

[49] Hogaboom Interview, 15 May 1967.
[50] Forrestel, *Spruance,* p. 152.
[51] RKT to Commandant, Marine Corps, letter, 21 Dec. 1950.
[52] Interview with Admiral Hill, March 11, 1967.

TEN DAYS OF PREPARATION

On 12 July Rear Admiral Hill was directed to assume command of the Tinian Attack Force (TF 52) and to capture, occupy, and defend Tinian.[53]

The loading operation commenced on 15 July in Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, with LSTs, and continued through 23 July with LCTs, LCMs, LCVPs, and pontoon barges being loaded in the latter part of this period. Rear Admiral Hills report stated:

> Physical loading was accomplished with a minimum of difficulty, the beaches and harbor facilities at Saipan proving adequate to handle the loading.

Craft involved in the movement from Saipan to Tinian were 537 amtracs, 130 DUKWs, 100 LCVPs, 92 LCMs, 37 LSTs, 31 LCIs, 20 LCTs, and 14 pontoon barges plus 6 APAs, 2 APs, and 2 LSDs.[54]

To permit bombardment ships to do their work close to shore, the minesweepers swept to within five hundred yards and found no mines on the west coast of Tinian. They did their sweeping off Tinian Town on the day before the assault (Jig Day) in order to foster the impression that the Marines were going to land there soon. The mineable waters off the White Beaches were limited and these were not swept until Jig Day, beginning at 0600. The only mines swept in the whole Tinian Area were 17 in Asiga Bay off the Yellow Beaches, and these were not swept until after the assault landing.

Day time UDT reconnaissance of the beaches off Tinian Town was also carried out on Jig Day minus one. And, more importantly, a logistic support plan was developed which it was hoped would move all the essentials across the narrow White beaches on wheels or tractors directly to the divisional dumps. This was to prevent any large amount of logistic support piling up on the beach during a rehandling operation. Everything that could be was pre-loaded onto the DUKWs or tractors which would carry it direct to the divisional dump.

REHEARSAL

No rehearsal for Tinian was scheduled or held. Admiral Hill wrote:

> Naturally there had been no opportunity for rehearsals, but there had been

[53] COMPHIBSPAC (CTF 51) Letter of Instruction A21–44, 12 Jul. 1944.

[54] CTF 52 (COMPHIBSPACGRP Two), Report of Capture of Tinian, 24 Aug. 1944, p. 6.

close liaison among all commands throughout the planning period, and Captain Robertson had followed through thoroughly on all the complex cargo handling procedures.[55]

THE DAY OF THE ASSAULT—TINIAN

Two LCI(G)s described the early stages of the assault:

> At the time of the attack, it had stopped raining, but the sky was overcast and there was still a gentle easterly breeze. Visibility was fair except on the beach. There, the smoke and dust raised by preliminary bombardment made it impossible to distinguish the shoreline.[56]
>
> * * * * *
>
> . . . Because of a strong wind and current from the northeast direction, station keeping at the line of departure was practically impossible. . . . Because of the terrific barrage laid down by guns from Saipan and also our Naval gunfire, it was impossible to see the beach. We had been warned beforehand of such a possibility and, if it occurred, to fire rockets when the LCI(G)-77 fired hers, because that ship had radar and this ship hasn't. This was done. The effects were not noticeable because of visibility. . . .[57]

Even more than at Saipan, the gun support just prior to the assault was pretty much "by guess and by God" at least for the smaller ships which did not have radar. The report of the LCI Group Commanders indicates the problem:

> This Group formed on a line of departure, five ships abreast in the first line, three ships abreast, 200 yards astern in the second line. As ships left the line of departure at 0819 and proceeded toward the beach, smoke became too thick to see rocket ranging shots. So radar was used to pick up [the] beach line. Results proved satisfactory as other ships observed time of firing on radar equipped flagship and judged their fire accordingly. LCIs in second line fired rockets after first line cleared. 40mm and 20mm guns were fired at beach area as no specific targets could be seen.[58]

PRELIMINARY AIR AND GUN BOMBARDMENT

One hundred fifty-six Army and Marine Corps guns and howitzers were ranged along southern Saipan to carry out the systematic bombardment of

[55] Hill Memo.
[56] LCI (G)-458 Action Report, 28 Oct. 1944, p. 1.
[57] LCI(G)-78 Action Report, no date. Action: 15 Jun.–24 Jul. 1944, p. 3.
[58] LCI Group Seven War Diary, 24 Jul. 1944.

every worthwhile target that air reconnaissance could discover within their range, which was about seven and a half miles. This was roughly the northern half of Tinian since Tinian lay from three to three and a half miles south of Saipan. Air and naval gun bombardment had responsibility for the southern half plus any guns located in the cliffs of Tinian.

U.S. gunners scored an early success since:

> According to information from a prisoner of war, Vice Admiral Kakuda, Commander First Air Fleet, and Colonel Ogata [Commanding Officer 50th Infantry Regiment] were both killed by artillery fire on Jig Day.[59]

The Japanese on Tinian were as secretive as their comrades on Guam, and reluctant to engage in shooting matches. Consequently, as late as Jig Day, well camouflaged large Japanese guns were being discovered in addition to small machine guns.

One Japanese 20-millimeter gun near the White Beach had survived all the preliminary air and gun bombardments. It came to life on 24 July as the following report indicates:

> At 0735 all ships were ready to launch. At about 0745 the right flank of the formation was fired upon . . . [by] a 20mm gun. . . . The fire was too close for comfort. . . . At 0758 a hit causing 4 casualties was observed on the signal bridge of LST 272. The same burst struck the LST forward. . . . Another burst . . . resulted in a hit on LST 340 causing an additional 4 casualties and on subsequent bursts, at least one hit was observed on a line of LVTs on starboard bow of LST-225. . . . Considering the character of the main deck cargo (gasoline drums and ammunition) it was an unpleasant 15 minutes. . . .[60]

Besides the 20-millimeter gun shooting at LSTs, the larger ships were not immune from Japanese guns with greater weight of shell.

> The *Colorado* (OBB-45) was hit 22 times by what is believed to have been a battery of six-inch coastal guns. 178 casualties were suffered which included two officers and 42 enlisted men killed. The *Norman Scott* (DD-690) was badly hit. She suffered 19 killed, including the Captain, and 47 wounded.[61]

As Admiral Hill told me:

> It certainly was an unusual sight to see those two tiny groups of 8 LVT and 16 LVT abreast take off from the Line of Departure for beaches White One and White Two respectively. Never had such an insignificant First Wave started a major offensive operation. . . .

[59] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 3 Aug. 1944.

[60] COMLSTGRP 39 Marianas Operation Report, 3 Aug. 1944, pp. 5–6.

[61] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR War Diary, 24 July 1944. See also *Colorado* to CINCPAC 240800, 260517 July 1944. Final figures were 39 dead, 109 wounded.

> At 0742 the First Wave hit White One, but not until eight minutes later did the First Wave arrive at White Two. This discrepancy had been caused by an unexpectedly strong current running at the time, which in the dust cloud and despite the guide boats and Mustang runs, caused them to drift off course, and require constant redirection.[62]

The assault landing went remarkably well. A tactical surprise had been obtained and held for some hours, because the demonstration landing off Tinian Town by the transports and related craft and the heavy air and gun bombardment of the Tinian Town area convinced the Japanese command that the main landing would turn out to be there. Consequently, one of the three battalions of the 50th Infantry Regiment was held in defensive position at Tinian Town all through Jig Day.

Seven of the fourteen large transports and cargo ships still in Saipan water. with the Second Marine Division embarked, carried out this useful demonstration off Tinian Town early on Jig Day. Following this demonst. tion, the Second Division was assault landed on the White beaches as soon as the Fourth Division had climbed through the narrow exits back of the beaches. The 27th Infant. / Division was held on Saipan in Landing Force Reserve but prep-ed t embark on four hours' notice, to land on Tinian.

By almost superhuman efforts the amphibians had landed the entire Fourth Division and one battalion of the Second Division by dark, including 48 tanks, the 77-millimeter pack howitzers, their many bulldozers, cherry picker cranes, and much hot cargo. A goodly share of the 15 dead from the first day's spirited assault were personnel in the two amtracs blown up by mines on White Beach Two.

Once a counterattack led by heavy tanks about 0300 on Jig Day plus one had been broken up and turned back in full retreat (although breaching our outer lines initially), the worst of the battle for Tinian was over.

Fortunately, the quick over-running of the airfield permitted cargo planes to provide emergency logistic support by shuttle planes.

At 1800 on Jig Day plus Four (28 July) all unloading had to be stopped because of rising surf. Our pl nes were already landing on Aslito airstrip, so while it could not be said that all was in hand logistic-wise, emergency logistic support by shuttle plane could be promised the Marines by the amphibians. The unloading situation at this time was described by the Amphibious Group Two War Diary:

[62] Hill.

> Heavy swells and accompanying high winds have prevented all unloading except by DUKWs and LVTs. If unsatisfactory sea conditions persist, plans have been made to launch emergency supplies by air.
>
> * * * * *
>
> As of 2400, all ships were on 15-minute notice preparatory to getting underway in case of heavy weather—increasing wind velocity and consequent rise in height of swells.[63]

General Schmidt's troops made 100 percent correct his estimate of eight days to complete the capture. On 1 August 1944, Tinian was declared secure, and the napalm flame bomb a "moderate success." [64]

The amphibians had had a few bad moments before this happened, and these had been primarily because of weather.

The LST-340, despite the fact that the Commanding Officer "acted in a cool and seamanlike manner," [65] broached and was lost as an operating ship. Numerous LCVP were lost and larger landing craft damaged.

LOGISTICS—TINIAN

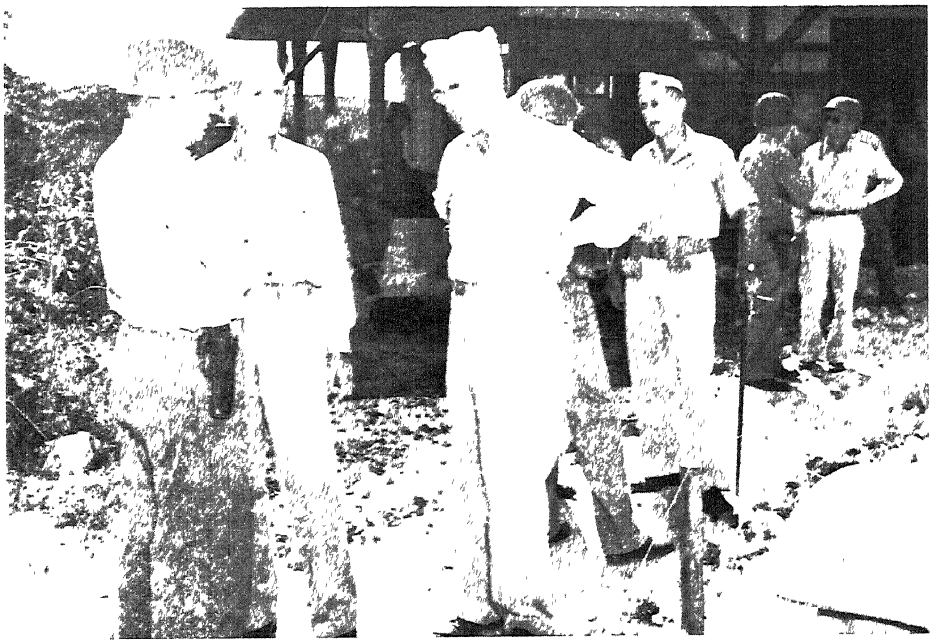
Commander LST Group 39 was directed by Rear Admiral Hill to make a quick collection of hydrographic data for use in the planned early beachings of LSTs in the White Beach area. Lieutenant Commander J. B. Hoyt, USNR, in his report wrote:

> On arrival at the beach, it was felt that perhaps the moment had not been well chosen. A brisk engagement was being fought between a Marine tank equipped with a flame thrower and a Jap machine gun nest about 50 yards from the northern corner of the beach. Marines were cleaning out the caves exposed by low water, working methodically south from the right-hand corner. Some Japanese in the rear of the caves were plainly visible but fortunately did not wish to call undue attention to themselves by indulging in target practice to seaward. Soundings were taken at 30 foot intervals over a front of approximately 150 yards from 300 feet out to the beach itself. . . . [I] reported that beaching was impracticable and recommended the use of a pontoon causeway.[66]

Pontoon causeways were used as this report showed:

> The improvement in this respect was extraordinary. In spite of narrow beach-

[63] COMPHIBSPACGRP Two War Diary, 29 Jul. 1944.
[64] CTF 52 to CTF 51, 231401 Jul. 1944.
[65] Endorsement of CTF 51 in LST-340 Grounding Report, 31 Jul. 1944.
[66] COMLSTGRP 39 Action Report, 3 Aug. 1944, pp. 6–7.



80-G-284249

Left to right: Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC; Admiral Raymond Spruance, USN; Vice Admiral Kelly Turner, USN; Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, USMC; Major General Clifton B. Cates, USMC; and Captain F. S. Withington, USN, gather for Tinian flag raising ceremonies, August 1944.

> heads, 38 LSTs unloaded in 3 days at Tinian an amount that took over 8 days at Saipan.
>
> * * * * *
>
> The Medical Plan, unsatisfactory to a high degree at Saipan, was amended for Tinian, proved excellent.[67]

The excellence of the logistic support rendered at Tinian, despite the handkerchief beaches and the scanty exits, was the most marked characteristic of the Tinian assault.

As a Marine recipient of this excellence wrote:

> This operation was in many ways a remarkable demonstration of the fact that preconceived notions and amphibious doctrine [actually he meant technique] can be altered rapidly on the spot. In effect a reenforced corps was landed over less than 200 yards of beach and over a difficult reef, and was

[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

> supplied through nine days of heavy combat, without handling so much as one pound of supplies in the usual shore party manner. Everything rolled on wheels. . . . The troops never lacked what they required at the time it was required.[68]

LSTs—A HIGH MARK

The LSTs were almost uniformerly praised for the manner in which they had carried out their difficult chore in FORAGER. But, that they had not quite reached perfection is indicated by the following comment:

> LST Commanding Officers are still short on seamanship and punch too many holes in the sides of ships they come alongside. The approved method of stopping the ship when coming alongside seems to be by ramming rather than depending upon the screws; this does the trick all right, but is rather severe upon the recipient of the blow.[69]

END RESULT OF THE MARIANAS CAMPAIGN

On 10 August 1944, CTF 51 logged in his War Diary that:

> 5,544 enemy dead have been buried, interned civilians number 13,262 and 404 POWs including 150 Koreans have been taken.[70]

The Marines' *Saipan* logs 5,614 as the total Japanese military casualties on Tinian through 3 August 1944. The Army's *Campaign in the Marianas* gives no exact figures but states that the Japanese on Tinian lost more than 8,000. The comparative large discrepancies between "bodies buried" and "estimated Japanese military strength on Tinian" are one of the unexplained aspects of the Marianas campaign.[71]

On 8 August 1944, Admiral Spruance declared that the capture and occupation phase of Saipan and Tinian would be considered complete at noon on 10 August.[72]

Despite the unfortunate furor raised later by the relief of an Infantry Division's Commanding General on Saipan by the Commander Fifth Fleet, the Commander Expeditionary Troops (Lieutenant General H. M. Smith,

[68] COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS FORAGER Report, Vol. 4, 12 Aug. 1944, Encl. (F), pp. 4–5.
[69] COMTRANSGRP Able, Operation Report of Saipan, p. 34
[70] CTF 51 War Diary, 10 Aug. 1944.
[71] (a) Hoffman, *Saipan* (Marine Corps Monograph), p. 124; (b) Love, *Marianas* (Army) p. 303.
[72] COMFIFTHFLT, 080100 Aug. 1944.

USMC) reported that one of the three factors decisive in the successful execution of the Marianas operation was:

> (a). The unprecedented degree of coordination between all Services throughout. This was based on all-around cooperation and understanding, and cemented by mutual respect and confidence, which has developed through a series of operations and has welded one experienced team from many varying elements.[73]

LOGISTICS—FORAGER

Looking at FORAGER as a whole, Fleet Admiral Nimitz's Staff wrote:

> In the Marianas Operation . . . any narrative would be incomplete without at least a brief description of the logistic support provided to maintain 600 ships and an estimated 300,000 naval, marine, and army personnel at over 1000 miles from our nearest base and 6000 miles from the United States.[74]

Some idea of the magnitude of the FORAGER logistic problem can be obtained from CINCPAC's order to Commander Service Force Pacific to have 21 Fleet oilers available to support that part of the Pacific Fleet participating in FORAGER. These oilers had to be prepared to deliver to these ships 158,800,000 gallons of fuel oil during each two-week period commencing 1 June 1944.

The logistics problem was eased by the availability for the first time of Fleet repair facilities at Majuro, Kwajalein, and Eniwetok in the Central Pacific, as well as at Seadler Harbor, Manus Island in the Southwest Pacific Area.

Six hospital ships were available in the Central Pacific to take care of the wounded and the sick, as well as mobile and base hospitals having over 10,000 beds in the South Pacific Area.

Nearly everyone agreed that the logistic support in FORAGER had been pretty remarkable. However, there were still some improvements possible. Rear Admiral Hill, who had been neck deep in logistics at Saipan and Tinian wrote:

> Positive measures must be taken in future operations to provide adequate unloading on the beaches at an early date so that assault and garrison shipping may be unloaded at a maximum rate. . . . It is a matter of record that on Dog plus Twelve Day, when the unloading of the first garrison echelon was

[73] CTF 56, FORAGER Report, para. 6, p. 10.
[74] CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Monthly Operations Report, June, 1944, Annex A, p. 99.

at its height, there were 13 cranes working on the beaches of *which 9 had been provided by the Navy.*[75]

FORAGER AND THE JAPANESE

As far as is known the Japanese were both strategically and tactically surprised by the assault on Saipan, although the concentration of Task Force 58 at Majuro in the Marshalls had been "discovered by Lieutenant Takehilo Chihaya in an extraordinary aerial reconnaissance." [76]

According to a brief note on 4 June 1944 in Admiral Nimitz's Command Summary presumably based on Japanese radio traffic:

> The enemy considers it possible that another striking force sortied from Majuro during the night of 4–5 June.[77]

But many in the Japanese Navy except for Commander Chikataka Nakajima, Intelligence Officer on the Staff of the Combined Fleet, thought our amphibious assault was headed for the Palau Islands or the islands between New Guinea and the Philippines.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MARIANAS OPERATION

Vice Admiral Turner wrote:

> I consider the Marianas Campaign, in its entirety, to be perhaps the best-rounded historical example of a purely amphibious operation designed for other than local ultimate military purpose. It had everything. The strategic developments both before and after that campaign are highly interesting and significant.[78]

The FORAGER Operation was the largest amphibious operation of the Pacific War up to June 1944. It was not the longest—since Guadalcanal had lasted from 8 August 1942 through 8 February 1943—but it had even more strategic significance than Guadalcanal. When we took Guadalcanal, we broke through the Japanese outer line of defense. When we took the Marianas, we broke through the Japanese inner line of defense.

Admiral Turner was quoted by the *Army and Navy Journal* in 1945 as having said that the capture of the Marianas was the turning point of war in

[75] CTG 52.2 Saipan Report, 23 Aug. 1944, p. 69.
[76] Ito, *The End of the Imperial Japanese Navy*, p. 80.
[77] CINCPAC Command Summary, Book Five, 4 Jun. 1944, p. 1945.
[78] RKT to Commandant of the Marine Corps, letter, 21 Dec. 1950.



Turner Collection

Vice Admiral Turner relaxes at a variety show while enroute from Guam to Pearl after completion of the Marianas Operation, 23 August 1944. Commodore Paul Theiss, Chief of Staff, on his right and Captain Stanley F. Patten, Commanding Officer, USS Rocky Mount, *on his left.*

the Pacific. He was far from alone in that military judgment, although the public has been told far more frequently that Midway marked that important corner. It is believed that after Midway the United States Navy turned from defensive operations to offensive operations. After Guadalcanal, the Japanese Navy turned from offensive operations to defensive operations, but after the Marianas all of the Japanese military largely resigned themselves to eventual defeat. The Marianas was a major turning point in that important respect.

Vice Admiral Shigeyoshi Miwa, who commanded Japan's submarine fleet at the end of the war, put the situation in a nutshell when he opined:

> Our war was lost with the loss of Saipan.[79]

General Holland M. Smith also put the matter succinctly:

> I have always considered Saipan the decisive battle of the Pacific offensive.[80]

As Fleet Admiral King wrote:

> The Japanese, like the United States Navy, realized that the Mariana Islands were the key to the Pacific War. . . .
>
> * * * * *
>
> The effect of our seizure of the Mariana Islands upon informed opinion in Japan was very striking, and it was recognized almost immediately that Saipan was the decisive battle of the war, and that its loss removed hope for a Japanese victory. . . .[81]

THE FIRST YEAR

While headed for the barn at Pearl Harbor from Guam, Vice Admiral Turner's Staff celebrated its first anniversary. The blurb in the ship's Press News of the flagship, the *Rocky Mount,* announced to all who would read:

> No one who participated in the GALVANIC Operation will forget Thanksgiving night, 1943 when the Admiral outwitted and outguessed 8 Jap planes attempting to attack our formation. CINCPOA's Air Officer, Colonel Eareckson, termed it 'the most magnificent maneuvering' he had ever seen.
>
> If the Admiral drives his help hard, it is because he does not spare himself. If he is impatient of incompetence and bungling, it is because his own mind has the edge and temper of fine steel.[82]

Few guessed on that day of 24 August 1944, that a year later they would be in Tokyo.

[79] USSBS Interrogation No. 366, Vol. II, p. 293.
[80] Smith, *Coral and Brass,* p. 181.
[81] *King's Record,* pp. 557, 560.
[82] *Rocky Mount* Press News Special Edition, 24 Aug. 1944.

CHAPTER XXIII

Iwo Jima
Death at Its Best

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WRITTEN RECORD

When Vice Admiral Turner returned to Pearl Harbor from the Marshalls, he wrote:

> On return here we were swamped with a lot of battle plans for future operations, as well as the usual tremendous batch of mail. This business of everyone's writing long reports about every operation has almost gotten me down. In fact, I have stopped reading any of them.[1]

A few days later he wrote:

> I wish there were a way to abolish such things as reports.[2]

Despite this reluctance Vice Admiral Turner sent in a 317-page report on FORAGER.[3]

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMANDER JOINT EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Admiral Turner, when the Marine Corps in 1950 sent him a draft copy of its historical monograph on Tinian, made a number of comments including the following:

> In an amphibious operation, the Commander Joint Expeditionary Force has a general, but a quite definite responsibility for the ultimate success of the Expedition. He also has a specific responsibility, not only for the success of the naval and much of the air effort, but also for successfully landing the troops, and for continuing to provide them with support and the material

[1] RKT to TSW, letter, 13 Mar. 1944.
[2] RKT to Rear Admiral R. O. Davis, Commander Amphibious Training Command, letter, 15 Mar. 1944.
[3] CTF 51 FORAGER Report, 25 Aug. 1944.

means necessary to enable them to live and fight, until the completion of the amphibious phase.[4]

On the other hand, the Commanding General of troops has the exclusive duty of preparing and executing the major troop tactical plans for the operations on shore. The Commander Joint Expeditionary Force is concerned with the troop plan for shore operations only to the extent of such matters as offering technical advice concerning the provision of the naval and the initial air support, and of other important similar but contributory efforts.

The successful discharge of both the naval responsibility for landing and supplying the troops, and also of the troop responsibility for land operations, often depends to a considerable extent on the choice of the landing beaches. The choice of the beaches is the business of both sea and land commanders. This matter requires close cooperation and a careful consideration of all alternative beaches, having due regard to the proper functions and military responsibilities of both parties.

REORGANIZATION AND ENLARGEMENT

Late in September 1944, when the planned amphibious assault operations in the European Theater had all been accomplished, the amphibious groups in the Atlantic and Mediterranean were moved to the Pacific and a large scale regrouping took place. Sixteen amphibious groups were established.[5] A subordinate command of the Pacific Ocean Area was set up in Guam on 1 December 1944. In November 1944, a proposal was made to initiate administrative headquarters for the amphibious forces in Manila after its capture. It was believed by Vice Admiral Turner that very large amphibious forces in the Western Pacific could be better controlled, and the invasion of Japan could be more realistically planned from Manila than from Pearl Harbor.[6]

WHILE THE CAT'S AWAY

On 5 September 1944, Vice Admiral Turner left Pearl Harbor on a month's leave. While he was on the mainland, the decision was made at

[4] RKT to Commandant of the Marine Corps, letter, 21 Dec. 1950.

[5] COMPHIBSPAC, Confidential Circular Letter AL-2—Rev 2, 25 Oct. 1944, subj: Organization of Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet.

[6] COMPHIBSPAC letters, Ser 000207 of 13 Nov. 1944, and Ser 00016 of 24 Jan. 1945.

the Joint Chiefs' level to advance the date of the landings on Leyte Island in the Philippines from 20 December to 20 October 1944. Also cancelled out were the scheduled landings on Mindanao Island and the lesser part of the Central Pacific STALEMATE Operation against the Palau Islands, Yap, and Ulithi.

To provide adequate forces for the Leyte operation, it was planned to place the Eastern Attack Force assigned to assault Yap and Ulithi in STALEMATE, and the Commander Third Amphibious Force, Vice Admiral T. S. Wilkinson, at the disposal of General MacArthur. The Western Attack Force in STALEMATE was called upon to provide from within its available resources a Regimental Combat Team to assault Ulithi.

PERSONNEL PROBLEMS CONTINUE

Vice Admiral Turner continued to plug for his officers. His success was minimal, but at least his subordinates knew he was trying hard to obtain recognition for them.

On the day he shoved off for the mainland on leave, he recommended that Transport Squadron Commanders be promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral, and that Transport Division Commanders be advanced to Commodore. He told the Department quite frankly:

> Another important reason for assigning officers of the rank of rear admiral and commodore to the positions mentioned is the great need, for morale purposes, of providing, in the Amphibious Forces, opportunity for promotion to the upper ranks. The work is important, arduous, and involves frequent combat. Once an officer enters the Amphibious Forces, it is difficult for him to obtain a transfer to other forces where he may have better chances for promotion, because he cannot be spared from this highly specialized field. While there are many admirable and very competent officers in the Amphibious Forces, there is an unfortunate tendency among officers who believe they have a good chance for promotion to Flag rank to seek sea employment in other combat types. This is not a healthy condition and it is earnestly hoped that it can be corrected.[7]

It is a matter of regret to record that only a very partial sale of this recommendation was made to the upper echelons of the Navy and that transport division commanders remained senior captains and that transport squadron commanders were promoted to commodore rather than to rear

[7] COMPHIBSPAC to CINCPAC, letter, Ser 000157 of 5 Sep. 1944, subj: Reorganization of Transports.

admiral. As the Administrative History of the Amphibious Forces relates in regard to the amphibious forces:

> Warranted or unwarranted, this inferiority complex did exist among many officers and enlisted men.[8]

Commodore Peyton, Admiral Turner's first Chief of Staff and an observer of the amphibians in early days of the Pacific Campaign, told me:

> The Amphibious Force suffered from the lack of 1st class officers. Many were 'fitted' instead of 'best fitted.' This sometimes affected their approach to the war. The personnel of the Navy were largely unprepared mentally for fighting, for killing people, for instantaneous decisions to take offensive action.
>
> Reifsnider and Kiland were the two best officers in the early days. Impossible to get Reifsnider promoted, as Admiral Turner repeatedly urged. After I left the Staff, Turner finally got him spotted to Commodore (April 1943) and then later he was selected to rear admiral.
>
> Linscott was a well rounded staff officer who knew the details of amphibious operations. He was very capable and devoted to his tasks. He had an encyclopedic mind, and was loyal to the hilt to Turner.
>
> Ghormley couldn't make up his mind and was full of 'qualifications.' Halsey always seemed to make up his mind quickly, except in the November 1942 period, when he backed into Indecision Corner. Browning, his Chief of Staff, was brilliant but erratic and given to flights from reality.
>
> I thought Turner should have relieved Ghormley and Reifsnider should have relieved Turner, and that is no disrespect to Halsey whom I have known since 1908. Both myself and family are devoted to him.[9]

WHERE NEXT?

The Gilberts, the Marshalls, and the Marianas amphibious operations brought to full fruition the steadily developing capability of the combatant Navy in the Pacific Ocean to pick its objectives quite free from the short leash of land-based fighter aircraft, whose cover was inherently modestly ranged. During the Marianas operation, the Fast Carrier Task Forces of the Pacific Fleet had beaten off the carrier air attacks of the whole Japanese Mobile Fleet and in all of the Pacific campaigns the heaviest air attacks of land-based fighters and bombers, which the Japanese had been able to mount against them.

The attainment of this capability, along with a highly developed am-

[8] Administrative History of Amphibious Forces Pacific Fleet, Vol. 1, p. 130.
[9] Peyton.

phibious expertise, restored full confidence to the professional personnel of the seagoing Navy in the Pacific. Their confidence had been greatly shaken, first by the successful Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, later by our short step by short step campaign up the Solomons and the even shorter steps of the campaign in the southwest Pacific, these steps being measured by the range of land-based fighter aircraft.

The urge to keep moving pervaded the whole Pacific Fleet. The pressure to do so from on high was unrelenting. The big questions were "Where do we go next?" and "How soon?"

At this stage of the war, July-August 1944, the planners were divided between (a) those who believed the Japanese war effort could be starved into innocuousness, thus forcing political submission without the necessity of waging large land battles on the Japanese home islands and (b) those who as loudly proclaimed that since all through the Central Pacific campaign the Japanese had fought on to the death under hopeless circumstances, a large-scale invasion of Japan would be essential to subdue the Japanese martial spirit.

It is from this background that, in mid-June 1944, the Joint Chiefs asked General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz to comment on the practicability of by-passing the then presently selected next major objective (Leyte in the Philippines on 15 November) and landing amphibious assault forces directly on either Formosa or on Japan proper.

General MacArthur thought the proposal to by-pass the Philippines and land on Formosa direct to be "unsound" and the proposal to by-pass the Philippines and land on Japan "utterly unsound."

Admiral Nimitz made no such dramatic reply, but he cast cold water on both proposals when he replied:

> For the present, no change in approved strategic concepts is recommended.[10]

Admiral King, at this time, downgraded the necessity of having Luzon in the Philippines as a logistic base for the Fleet. He believed the Pacific Fleet could be maintained indefinitely in the Western Pacific by a combination use of Guam, Saipan, and Eniwetok, and that bases on Luzon in the Philippines were not an essential for rapid progress in the war.[11]

[10] (a) JCS 287/1, Strategic Plan for the Defeat of Japan, 8 May, 1943; (b) CCS 447, Overall Plan for the Defeat of Japan, 2 Dec. 1943; (c) JCS to CINCSWPA, CM–IN–5137, 12 Mar. 1944 (CINCSWPA's Communication Log); (d) JCS to CINCPOA and CINCSWPA, CM–OUT 50007 of 13 Jun. 1944; (e) CINCSOWESPAC 180936 Jun. 1944; (f) CINCPOA 040400 Jul. 1944.

[11] *King's Record,* p. 561.

Actually, the combination of Fleet bases most used during the last part of 1944 turned out to be Guam, Saipan, and Ulithi Atoll, which was 400 miles southwest of Guam, while Eniwetok was 1,000 miles just a bit south of east of Guam. Ulithi Atoll, with a lagoon of about 150 square miles, was an exceptionally fine Fleet Anchorage and by early 1945 became a well developed Mobile Fleet Base.

On 26 July 1944, President Roosevelt went to Pearl Harbor, and in a conference with Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur, without the Joint Chiefs of Staff being present, largely determined the objectives of the next major campaign in the Pacific. Admiral King, although he was in Pearl Harbor as late as the 22nd of July, back from a "look-see" visit to the Marianas, makes a strong point of the fact that, although readily available, he was not invited to the conference.[12]

By and large, in mid-July 1944, Vice Admiral Turner favored taking Luzon in order to obtain Fleet bases there before going to either China or Formosa. He so informed Admiral King, when the latter was in Pearl Harbor at this time and his beliefs became a matter of record.[13] The seizure of Formosa, largely, was Admiral King's baby. This included not only the island, but the Pescadores in Formosa Straits and a bite of the adjacent China Coast—probably at Amoy. Admiral King believed that all sea and air lines of communication from Japan south could be effectively throttled by holding the Marianas, Formosa, and a strategic foothold on the China Coast. All Pacific Fleet planners agreed that Japan could not long live, much less aggressively fight a war, without overseas oil, raw materials and food from the Netherlands East Indies and Malaysia.

How to best accomplish this objective of cutting off Japan from her overseas resources, however, was the bone of contention causing the strongest arguments.

General MacArthur always reached the jumping up and down stage when anyone straightforwardly recommended future operations which did not include his returning to Luzon in the Philippines. For him, any such plans bordered on the "utterly unsound" classification, and he always worked into his despatches a reiteration of the political advantages to the United States of a "Luzon in the Philippines" campaign.[14]

Just for the record, it is worth noting that shortly after the Presidential

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 567.

[13] Pacific Conferences, CINCPOA Headquarters, minutes, 13–22 Jul. 1944.

[14] (a) MacArthur to Marshall, CM–IN–15058 18 Jun. 1944, and CM–IN–2479, 3 Aug. 1944; (b) JPS 404/5, Future Operations in the Pacific, 23 Jun. 1944.

Pearl Harbor conference, General MacArthur had gone way out on the limb to fortify his arguments for "Luzon next" by predicting in a meeting with a planning staff representative from the War Department that his losses in a Luzon campaign would be "inconsequential" and by giving "his personal guarantee" that "a Luzon Campaign could be completed in thirty days to six weeks." [15]

Despite the compelling nature of General MacArthur's advocacy, the shoal which finally scuttled "full steam ahead for Formosa now" at the Washington JCS and departmental level, in early September 1944, was the shortage of troops currently in the Pacific Ocean Area or to become available by late December 1944. The Normandy landing in June 1944, had gone well, but in early September 1944, no one could reasonably predict when the tremendous troop resources then in Europe would become available to move to the Pacific.

Despite General MacArthur's urgings, the Joint Chiefs kept the Formosa operations stewing on the back burner when, on 9 September 1944, they issued a new directive for the Pacific campaigns. General MacArthur was ordered to occupy the Leyte-Surigao area in the Central Philippines with a target date of 20 December 1944, in order to support a further advance to Formosa by Admiral Nimitz's forces on 1 March 1945. However, and more to his liking, General MacArthur was also told to be prepared to seize Luzon on 20 February 1945, with Admiral Nimitz and the Central Pacific Forces in a supporting role.[16]

Before the month of October 1944 was three days old, however, as will be related, General MacArthur had carried the day. His "strongest non-concurrence" with any other objective than Luzon in the Philippines was powerful medicine in any military planning circle's coffee break.

In connection with "where next" after the Leyte campaign, Admiral Hill recalled that:

> I had had some interesting discussions with Turner on this subject. He had given serious consideration to the possibility of by-passing all of these (Formosa, Okinawa, and the Volcano Islands, which included Iwo Jima) and making a direct assault on the Tokyo Plain with nine divisions. Such a plan was feasible from the amphibious and troop deployment angles, but the great distance of Tokyo from our nearest base would require that we be entirely dependent upon Fleet carriers for all air support except for the long

[15] Notes on Conference at Gen. Hq., SWPA, 7 Aug. 1944. Colonel William L. Ritchie, AUS, was Deputy Chief of the Strategy and Policy Group, Operations Division, WDGS.

[16] (a) JCS 172nd Meeting, minutes, 5 Sep. 1944; (b) JCS–CM–OUT 27648, 9 Sep. 1944.

range B-29's based in the Marianas. The nearest base would be Guam, which was just in the process of being developed. So that logistics and lack of repair facilities would also produce many difficulties. I was not too enthusiastic about his idea, although I often wondered if I was opposing a bold plan with too little consideration, just as he had done with my Tinian proposal.[17]

WHO GETS WHAT NAVAL FORCES WHEN?

As matters actually transpired, the high level planners' struggles to allocate simultaneously a suitable proportion of naval forces, shipping and logistic support to both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters of operation eased off about the time Guam was recaptured and the invasion of Southern France was made on 15 August 1944. But the planners' travail over the allocation of naval forces in the Pacific between the effort under Admiral Nimitz's direction and that under General MacArthur's direction went on and on through late 1944 into 1945.

The handwritten memo reproduced on page 977, in which the General's name is twice misspelled, indicates the continuing problems. It specifically refers to General MacArthur's despatch of 8 July 1944.[18]

CAUSEWAY—THEN DETACHMENT—AT THE WORKING LEVEL

When FORAGER was over and done, Formosa was very much on CINCPOA's officially approved timetable issued to him by the Joint Chiefs. As Vice Admiral Forrestel relates in his book on Admiral Spruance:

> On his return to Pearl Harbor from the Marianas, Admiral Spruance recommended to Admiral Nimitz that the next Fifth Fleet operations be for the capture of Iwo Jima and then Okinawa. Nimitz advised him that the time table of the Joint Chiefs of Staff provided that Formosa be the next Fifth Fleet objective, following the capture of the [Central] Philippines by General MacArthur.[19]

So, the FIFTHPHIBFOR Staff started planning and getting ready for CAUSEWAY, the operation designed to land the Tenth Army, under Lieu-

[17] Hill memo of 17 Nov. 1966.

[18] MacArthur CM–IN–6202, 8 Jul. 1944, Archives Branch of the Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md.

[19] Forrestel, *Spruance,* p. 163.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF
UNITED STATES FLEET 9 July 44

From: CinC, COS, OPS C

McArthur's recent despatch re so-called "Reno V" appears to omit any considerations other than McArthur's views and desires. It assumes that CinCPOA's forces are at his beck and call regardless of what JCS have laid down for CinCPOA to do. The "end-around" into Lingayen Gulf is (OVER)

, to my mind, a "vision". In fact, the whole concept & remarks of views and desires predicated on beating CinCPOA's already outlined tasks from JCS

Watch this matter closely

K

tenant General S. B. Buckner, AUS, on Formosa, the Pescadores Islands, and on the eastern coast of China in the vicinity of Amoy. This assault was first planned to occur on 15 February 1945, but on receipt of the actual JCS directive, the landing was set for 1 March 1945.[20]

CAUSEWAY, a kettle of worms from the planners' viewpoint, absorbed a lot of planning energy before the principal operational commanders got their dander up and recommended in late September 1944 that CAUSEWAY be cancelled. Formosa was such a large land mass that these officers believed it would absorb more troops than the strategic situation justified and, more to the point, that it was beyond the troop and logistical support resources currently available in the Central Pacific.[21]

This conclusion fitted neatly into the "Luzon Homecoming" plans being formulated by General MacArthur in far away New Guinea, as well as the speed-up in our initial landing in the Central Philippines, so recently recommended by Admiral Halsey.

THE BIG, BIG CHANGE IN PLANS

On 13 September 1944, Admiral Halsey, commanding the Third Fleet during air raids on the Philippines, recommended to Admiral Nimitz, who passed the recommendation on to Admiral King and General MacArthur, that because of light enemy air opposition encountered in his air sweeps on 9–10 September 1944 against Mindanao, and on 12 September against the Visayas in the Central Philippines, that:

a. The planned amphibious assaults on Peleliu in the Western Caroline Islands, Yap in the northwestern Caroline Islands, Ulithi in the northwestern Caroline Islands, and Mindanao in the Southern Philippines be cancelled.
b. The troops and amphibious resources assigned to these operations, and Task Force 38 (the Fast Carrier Task Forces of the Pacific Fleet) should be used for an amphibious assault at Leyte in the Philippines earlier than the 15 November, currently planned.

Admiral Nimitz concurred with two reservations. He believed that the

[20] (a) JWPC, Future Operations in the Pacific 29 July, 1944; (b) JPS 160th Meeting, minutes, 2 Aug. 1944; (c) King to Marshall, memorandum, Ser 002356 of 18 Aug. 1944, subj: Future Operations in the Pacific; (d) JCS despatch 2405/77500 of 8 Sep. 1944. CM–OUT-27648.

[21] Headquarters Tenth Army to CINCPOA, letter, 26 Sep. 1944, subj: Feasibility of CAUSEWAY Operation.

Peleliu attack should go forward (to protect the right flank of the assault forces on Leyte) and that the capture of Ulithi was essential to provide an Advanced Fleet Base as an alternate to Eniwetok. He suggested that if General MacArthur did not desire to move promptly into Leyte, it might be feasible to take Iwo Jima in October using the forces currently assigned to the Yap operation. General MacArthur was considerably more reluctant to change and advance his plans, but on 14 September he acceded to an unusual despatch recommendation from the Joint Chiefs that he go along with Admiral Halsey's proposal as modified by Admiral Nimitz. He then told the JCS that he would attack Leyte on 20 October 1944.[22]

Subject to the two modifications, one major and one minor, proposed by Admiral Nimitz, the Joint Chiefs then approved Admiral Halsey's proposal and the proposed date for the Leyte landing.

When these changes were made, the question of "where next" after Leyte had not been settled, but all the important voices, except Admiral King's, were opting for Luzon.

FORMOSA OUT, IWO JIMA IN

At a conference with Admiral Nimitz in San Francisco at the end of September 1944, Admiral King was convinced, reluctantly, that the Central Pacific Area resources could be employed more profitably and perhaps more successfully against the Bonins or the Volcano Islands, and against the Ryukyus, than against Formosa. He also was assured that the Fast Carrier Task Forces could so reduce Japanese air power on the Formosan airfields that the amphibious assault forces of the Central Pacific would not be "sticking their heads in the lion's mouth" when they worked northward toward Luzon steering for Lingayen Gulf and General MacArthur's homecoming assault landing on northern Luzon.[23]

As for choosing Iwo Jima rather than Okinawa as the first objective on the final direct approach to Japan, it was obvious that the Japanese could bring far less air power to bear to defend Iwo Jima than they could at

[22] (a) COMTHIRDFLT to CINCPOA, 130300 Sep. 1944; (b) CINCPOA 130813, 130747, 132100, 140101, 141000, Sep. 1944; (c) MacArthur to JCS, CM-IN-12636, 14 Sep., and to CINCPOA 140316, 142359 Sep. 1944; (d) JCS to MacArthur in COMINCH, 141325 Sep. 1944.

[23] (a) Nimitz; (b) JCS CM-OUT 40782, 3 Oct. 1944; (c) *King's Record*, p. 575; (d) JCS 032255 Oct. 1944.

Okinawa. Okinawa was centrally located between Kyushu, the big southern island of Japan, and Formosa, and could also receive support from Japanese forces in Eastern China and, until Iwo Jima was in our hands, that latter island also. By capturing Iwo Jima first, we would knock out one of the four strong props holding an air umbrella over Okinawa and its approaches. Besides, the date when airbases in northern Luzon, helpful in an assault on Okinawa, would be available, was still problematical, despite General MacArthur's promise of a thirty-day to six-week campaign. Doing Iwo Jima first would make the availability of the northern Luzon bases for air support of the operation against Okinawa seem a bit more logical.

While Iwo Jima was not so close to the homeland as Okinawa, still Iwo Jima was of real importance to the Japanese. As a young Japanese infantry officer wrote in his diary in June 1944, long before the Iwo Jima assault was planned:

> Iwo Jima is the doorkeeper to the Imperial capital.[24]

Since the JCS did not issue their new Pacific campaign directive embodying Admiral King's change in mind until 3 October, it was not until 7 October 1944 that CINCPOA issued his staff study for the operation which envisioned a landing on 20 January 1945 at Iwo Jima in the Volcano Islands, 660 miles south of Tokyo.

The Iwo Jima campaign was given the code name of DETACHMENT. Many of the lower level in the Pacific Fleet thought the code name selected indicated that one of the pillars supporting the roof of air protection over Okinawa was to be detached. It was a pleasant thought for those who later were scheduled also to participate in the Okinawa operation.

Only nine days after 7 October, Vice Admiral Turner issued a guideline memorandum to his staff for preparing the operation plan for the amphibious phases of DETACHMENT.

Twenty-two years later, Admiral Spruance recalled in regard to this shift of objectives:

> The only change that we had later in the Central Pacific Operations was the substitution of Iwo Jima and Okinawa for Amoy and Formosa. I think that change was engineered in Washington at top levels, because Admiral King was very strong for Formosa.[25]

[24] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 170–45, Translations. Interrogations No. 35, Item No. B–4726–G.

[25] Admiral Spruance to Director of Naval History, letter, 26 Apr. 1966.

SPECIAL PLANNING STAFF FIFTHPHIBFOR

By the time the Marianas Campaign was completed, the Special Planning Staff assigned to FIFTHPHIBFOR in November 1943 had been disbanded. This Staff had been formed in November, 1943, with high hopes. It was assigned the mission of doing, in Pearl, the advance planning for the next ahead amphibious operation, while the regular FIFTHPHIBFOR Staff at the scene of the assault landing was devoting all its time and energy to obtaining success in the current amphibious operation. The creation of this small special staff, it was hoped, would materially shorten the spacing between the completion of one amphibious campaign and the launching of another, by a reduction in "planning time."

Regretfully, it was found that the Special Planning Staff was just one lap behind in applying to the detailed plans the fast improving techniques of amphibious operations. To illustrate, they were given the task of planning the Marianas amphibious assaults after the completion of the Gilberts campaign. While the regular staff was away from Pearl two months (8 January to 3 March) doing the Marshall operation, the Special Planning Staff unavoidably planned the Marianas on the basis of what had been learned about amphibious techniques up to and through the Gilberts operation. When the regular staff came back to Pearl, much of the work had to be redone on the basis of what had been learned in the Marshalls.[26]

CLOSE AIR SUPPORT

The problem of close air support had bothered Vice Admiral Turner all through the Guadalcanal, New Georgia, Gilbert Islands, and Marshall Islands Campaigns.

As has been related earlier, Commander, Fifth Amphibious Force had tried in January 1944, to establish "Support Aircraft" as an administrative unit, as well as a task group, within the Fifth Amphibious Force. This effort had failed and "Support Aircraft" remained under the administrative command of Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet, Vice Admiral J. H. Towers. The administrative commander was responsible for its training. Twenty-seven officers and 60 enlisted men were involved in the administrative unit.

Five days before the assault landings on Saipan, Vice Admiral Turner

[26] Administrative History of Amphibious Forces Pacific Fleet, Vol. 1, p. 71.

had reopened with the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet, the touchy question of the organization of the Support Aircraft Command.

Vice Admiral Turner recalled in the first paragraph of his letter that he had been directed on 18 April 1944 not to reopen the subject "unless actual experience under approved arrangements indicates further change is necessary."

In his letter, he stated that that time had now come, since the present system lacked efficiency and had not proven satisfactory.

He offered the thought that

> the amount of training so far given by the Air Force Pacific Fleet to Support Command is nil. . . .
>
> Apparently it still is not well understood that all of the units directly and locally involved in an amphibious operation must be so closely related to each other as to form a single team under a single control. . . . Furthermore, the planning functions must be so arranged that all individual plans are fully correlated by one command.
>
> The point at issue is whether or not the Support Aircraft Command shall be a group of the Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, with a special liaison to the Air Force, Pacific Fleet, or shall be a group of the Air Force, and assigned to the Amphibious Forces only during actual operations.[27]

It would have been diplomatic to have waited until after the experience of FORAGER had been gained to renew this close air support command proposal since COMINCH's and CINCPAC's directions were only two months old, but such was not the procedure followed by Vice Admiral Turner. His proposal had been strongly opposed by many of the senior aviators of the Navy who were reluctant to grant control of naval air operations to non-aviation commands regardless of circumstances. This opposition extended to the amphibious forces, even though its Commander, Vice Admiral Turner, was a former naval aviator.

Reconsideration and finally approval of the Support Aircraft Command proposal made by Vice Admiral Turner was granted by Admiral King on 1 October 1944. This was in time for the planning to go forward on the new basis for the Iwo Jima operation.

There were a few naval aviators whose thoughts in regard to close air support went much further than just placing the aircraft in the objective area

[27] COMPHIBFORPAC to CINCPAC, letter, CAF/A3–1/Ser 00609 of 10 Jun. 1944, subj: Organization of Support Aircraft Command, with endorsements thereon and reply thereto. See also previous letters, Ser 494 of 11 Dec 1943, and 00139 of 22 Jan. 1944. COMAIRPAC (Vice Admiral J. H. Towers) unfavorable endorsement was dated 19 February 1944. COMINCH letter, Ser 001014 of 29 Mar. 1944. COMPHIBSPAC, Circular Letter AL-11–Rev 2, 13 Jul. 1945.

of an amphibious assault landing under one command, on a temporary basis. One such naval aviator expressed his belief that:

> Close air support requires a very high degree of skill and prolonged efforts. The logic of the situation, as I saw it, was that one Service, the Navy, should take over close air support and do it all—since the primary responsibility for the island-hopping campaign was naval. The ambidextrous Navy would have been the ideal Service in the Pacific, since the same pilots and planes could best do the 'over the water tasks' associated with amphibious operations. It was not a practical or desirable solution in the Mediterranean or the English Channel, because of lack of adequate jeep carriers.[28]

That there was considerable reluctance to accept the change approved by COMINCH is evidenced by the fact that Commander Air Support, Control Unit, Fifth Amphibious Force, the senior air subordinate in the immediately reorganized Amphibious Force, did not break through the official muck and show up in the "Organization of the Pacific Fleet" which was published frequently by CINCPAC, until another twelve months had elapsed.[29]

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

On 1 August 1944, the Seventh Amphibious Force, with two Amphibious Groups assigned, was established under Commander Seventh Fleet in the Southwest Pacific Area. Rear Admiral Dan E. Barbey was designated the Commander, Seventh Amphibious Force, and in December 1944 advanced to Vice Admiral.

On 24 August 1944, COMPHIBPAC requested that a staff complement of 85 officers and a staff allowance of 194 enlisted personnel be authorized for his command.[30] When approved, this was the final enlargement of the staff. In terms of officers it was five times as large as the staff Rear Admiral Turner had started with at Guadalcanal.

A further administrative change took place on 1 September 1944, when all LCT Divisions were decommissioned, and on the same day, all LCT Groups were commissioned. This permitted larger groupings of the very valuable LCTs under the very few officers who were experienced in the operational and logistical nightmares of the LCTs.[31]

As soon as the necessary office facilities and berthing facilities could be

[28] Interview with Vice Admiral R. F. Whitehead, 4 Oct. 1961.
[29] Pacific Fleet, Administrative Organization Lists, Nov. 1944, Feb.-Oct. 1945.
[30] COMPHIBSPAC letter, Ser 1515 of 24 Aug. 1944.
[31] CINCPAC 120110 Aug. 1944.

made ready, a Subordinate Command of the Administrative Command, Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet, was established on Guam on 1 December 1944. Some 84 LCTs and 94 LCIs were based in the Marianas. A Landing Boat Replacement Pool and Repair Facility was established at Leyte, 31 December 1944, but was placed under the control of Commander Seventh Fleet.[32]

Late in 1944, efforts of Vice Admiral Turner to secure advance approval to establish a shore headquarters for the Amphibious Forces at Manila ran into a Chinese stone wall of empires. Manila was in General MacArthur's empire, and Admiral Nimitz was reluctant to poach in that area. As the Administrative History of COMPHIBSPAC delicately states:

> Favorable action on COMPHIBSPAC original proposal to set up ample shore facilities in Manila and its vicinity would have greatly facilitated planning and preparations for OLYMPIC [the Kyushu Operation] as experience in June and July, 1945, eloquently demonstrated. But jurisdictional differences doubtless made that decision impolitic in early 1945.[33]

During the pre-Iwo Jima period, Vice Admiral Turner politely turned away, without cordiality, departmental offers of Beach Jumper Units (sound decoy units) and Barrage Balloon Units, as not being worth the diversion of personnel or the time and effort to handle their impedimenta.[34]

A SLIGHT DELAY

On 18 November 1944, the date for the Iwo Jima assault, initially set to occur on 20 January 1945, was postponed to 3 February in order to provide six weeks between General MacArthur's and Admiral Nimitz's amphibious assaults which were using the same Pacific Fleet combatant ships. This postponement had not been in effect very long when General MacArthur reported that the construction of airfields on Leyte (desired to provide land-based air support to the assault in the Lingayen Area) had been delayed by heavy rainfall, and that instead of landing at Lingayan Gulf on 20 December 1944, the landing would be on 9 January 1945. This resulted in a further recommendation by Admiral Nimitz to postpone the assault on Iwo Jima

[32] COMPHIBSPAC, letters, Ser 00863 of 13 Sep. 1944 and Ser 001032 of 10 Nov. 1944.
[33] Administrative History of PHIBSPAC, Vol. 1, p. 134.
[34] (a) COMPHIBSPAC, letters, Ser 000213 of 15 Nov. 1944 and Ser 001101 of 9 Dec. 1944; (b) COMINCH Headquarters Memo, no date.

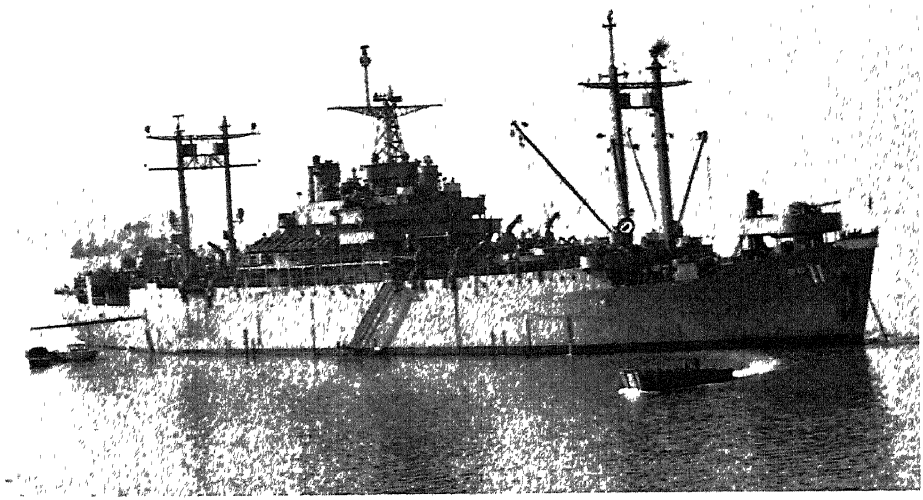
until 19 February 1945, in order to maintain the interval of six weeks. This delay was ordered on 6 December 1944.[35]

COORDINATION AT THE OBJECTIVE

At Iwo Jima and for the first time in the Central Pacific Ocean amphibious operations, all immediately pre-D-Day amphibious operations at the objective were coordinated under the control of a newly designated Commander Amphibious Support Force. Rear Admiral W. H. P. Blandy, was named to command this Force. Its tasks included the close-in gun bombardment by landing craft, gunboats, mortar and rocket craft, the minesweeping, the work of the underwater demolition teams, air control in the objective area, the air support, and commencing on Dog Day minus three, the gunfire support.

CINCPAC, on 16 December 1944, gave Commander Fifth Fleet authority

[35] CINCPOA to COMINCH, 030215 Dec. 1944 and reply thereto.



80–G–425464

USS Eldorado (*AGC–11*), *Vice Admiral Turner's flagship at the Iwo Jima invasion.*

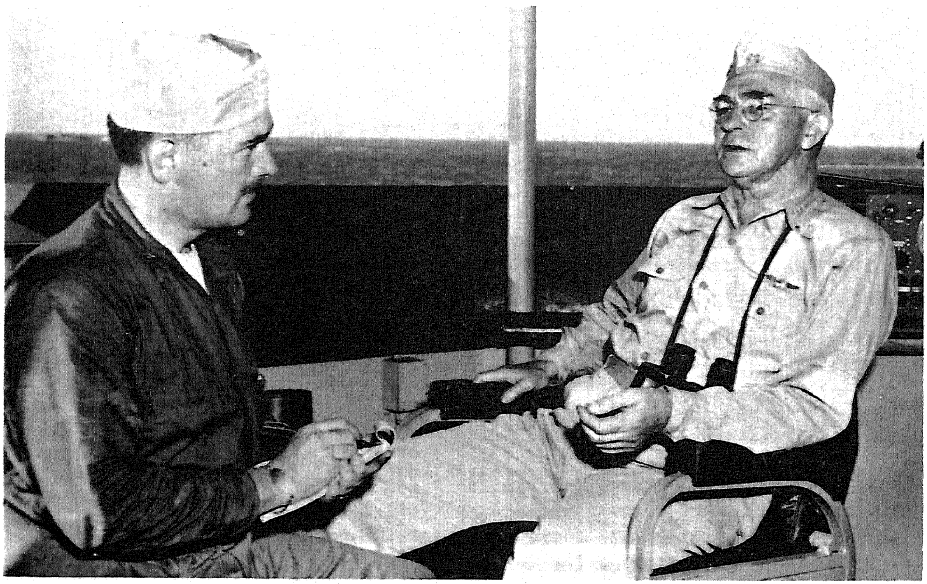
to designate either Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill or Rear Admiral W. H. P. Blandy as Second-in-Command of the Amphibious Forces at Iwo Jima or at Okinawa. Rear Admiral Hill, the senior, was so designated.

On 27 December 1944, loading for DETACHMENT commenced. On 10 January 1945, Vice Admiral Turner shifted his flag to the *Eldorado,* a newer amphibious command ship than his former flagship.

IWO JIMA—THE PHYSICAL FACTS

Iwo Jima was only one of a considerable number of Japanese Islands in the chain of islands stretching from the Empire to the northern Marianas. The Japanese called this chain of islands Nanpo Shoto. Located therein were three groups of which the two best known are the Bonin and the Volcano Islands.

When CINCPAC received his orders to occupy one or more positions in the Nanpo Shoto chain, there was some planners' discussion as to the best



Turner Collection

Vice Admiral Turner dictating to his writer enroute to Iwo Jima, 1945.

objective within this chain, since the Japanese had fortified several of the islands and built airfields thereon.[36]

On 20 June 1944, an outline plan to assault and seize Chichi Jima, as the final phase of a 13-day operation involving air strikes against Luzon, Formosa and Mainland Japan, was formulated and submitted to Admiral King. The code name of the plan was FARRAGUT, a weighty name for any bold naval operation.

While Chichi Jima, 146 miles north of Iwo Jima, had a good harbor—plus an advanced naval base, which Iwo Jima did not have—Chichi Jima was very, very rugged, and its one airfield was judged unsuitable to accommodate B-29s.

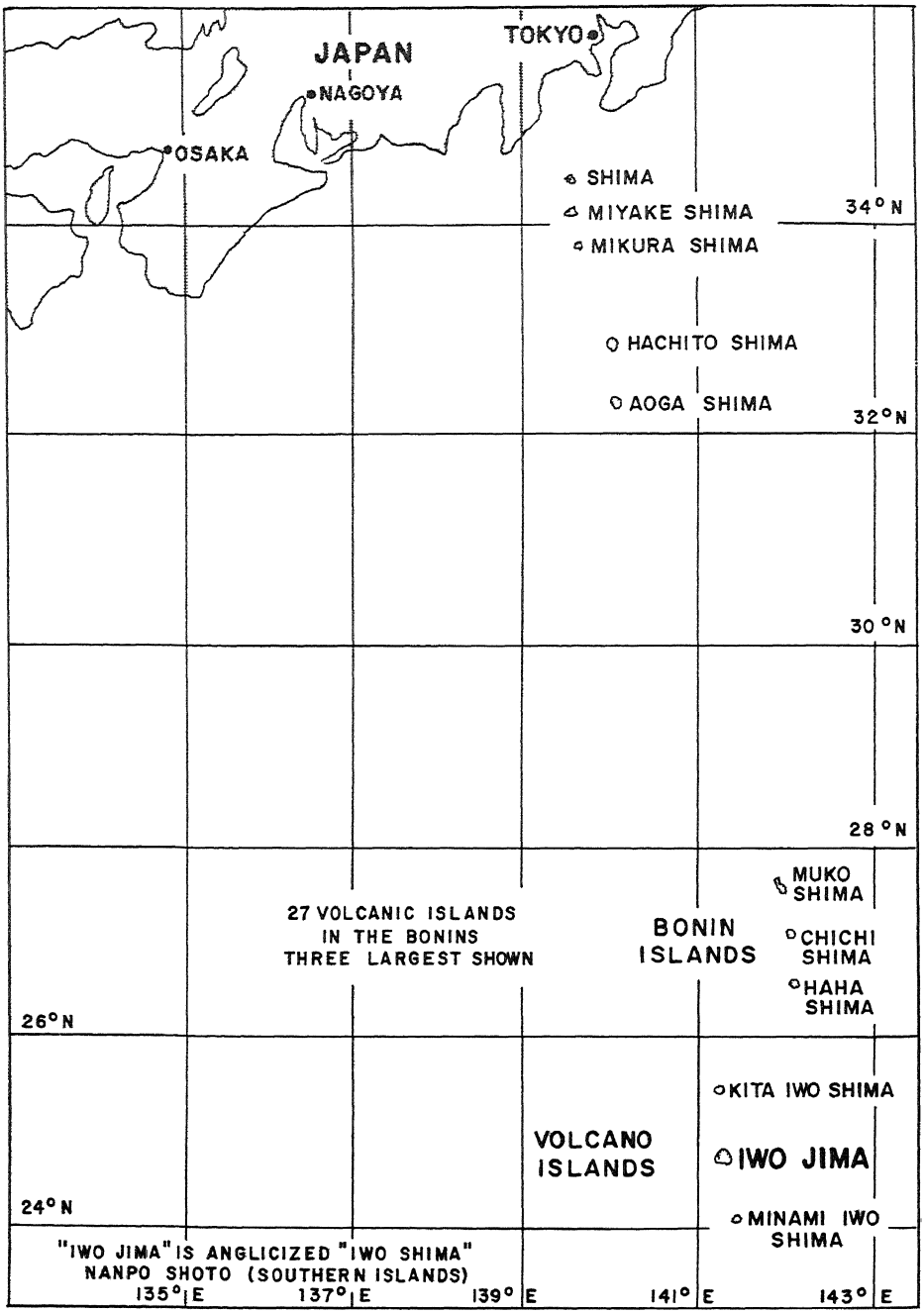
Iwo Jima, also known as Sulphur Island, is the largest of the Volcano Islands. It lies about equidistant in the 1,262 nautical miles between Yokohama, which is the port of Tokyo, and Saipan. This volcanic and pear-shaped island, four and a half miles long and eight hundred yards to nearly two and a half miles wide, lies with its stem axis—southwest to northeast—right into the northeast trade winds. The amphibians were glad to learn that there was no barrier reef on the eastern side of the island, and that the one on the western side was not formidable.

Mount Suribachi, an extinct volcano 546 feet high, rises from the narrow neck of the pear at the southwesterly end of the island. Mount Motoyama, still jetting steam sulphur fumes in 1945, rises about 350 feet high in the bulge of the pear on the northern westerly part.

The northern half of the island was largely a rocky and highly irregular plateau rising to three hundred feet above sea level and centered on Mount Motoyama. In this part there were steep cliffs protecting the island from sea assault and a series of canyons and caves providing strong natural defensive positions. There also was a sulphur mine and its refinery, a small sugar mill and minuscule farms which had absorbed the peacetime working endeavors of the civilian population on Iwo Jima. One completed airfield and one airfield under construction absorbed most of the level ground on the northern plateau. These airfields were known as Airfields No. 2 and No. 3.

Between Mount Suribachi and the northern plateau there were two miles of volcanic sand beaches on either side of the head of the pear. Five to thirty feet from the water's edge, the cinder wasteland rose rapidly from these beaches in a series of terraces culminating in steep embankments sur-

[36] (a) JCS to MacArthur—Nimitz info Arnold, Stillwell, 032255 Oct. 1944; (b) Outline Plan FARRAGUT 20 Jun 1944.



Nanpo Shoto Group (Southern Islands).

rounding the built-up and graded positions of the airfield in the southern mid-section of the island, known as Airfield No. 1.

All areas of Iwo Jima were within easy range of naval gunfire, but required air spot because of the elevation above sea level. The northern half of the island presented a difficult gunnery problem due to its irregularity.

THE PROSPECTIVE WEATHER

In general, the Pacific Ocean around Iwo Jima does not match the flat calm seas experienced by sailormen in the Central Pacific. The wind blows stronger, and from November to March, generally from the northwest. During the cool season, from December through April, temperatures are comfortable, 63° to 70° F., with three and a half to five inches of rain each month, mostly in drizzles of long duration. February normally is the driest month of the year with 3.5 inches of rainfall. Tides at Iwo Jima are two to three feet and tidal currents are not strong, except close to the beach where there is a strong undertow.

Since the landing was scheduled for 19 February, the easterly beaches of Iwo Jima seemingly would be the lea beaches and hence the preferred landing areas, the temperature would be comfortable and there would be some rain and drizzle. According to Vice Admiral Turner's plan:

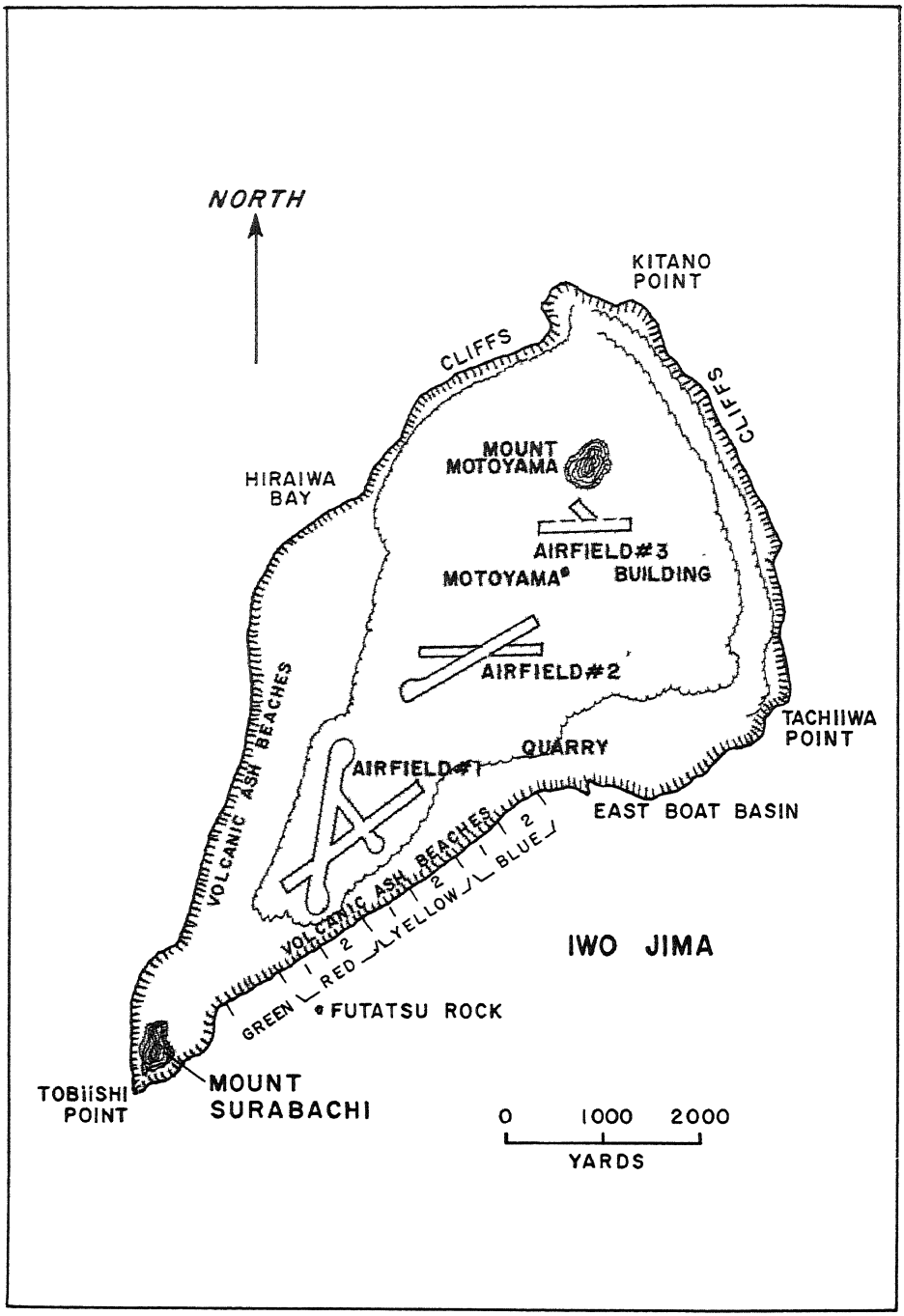
> The weather in the vicinity of Iwo Jima for January and February 1945 will probably be good. There will probably be no typhoons and no fog. . . .[37]

Perhaps best of all, from the Marines' viewpoint, Iwo had no mosquitos.

LOGISTICAL PROBLEM

Available information in late 1944 indicated that no streams or wells existed on Iwo Jima and that, in peacetime, the one thousand inhabitants collected their water in large cisterns made of volcanic rock. Driven wells reputedly brought in water too highly mineralized for ordinary drinking or cooking use. To feed the normal thirsts of the 70,000 men in the assault forces would require a large scale distillation of water and, before the distillation plants could be set up ashore, considerable tankerage. Three oil

[37] COMPHIBSPAC Op Plan A25–44, 27 Dec. 1944, Annex B, para. 13.


NORTH
KITANO POINT
CLIFFS
CLIFFS
MOUNT MOTOYAMA
HIRAIWA BAY
AIRFIELD#3
MOTOYAMA® BUILDING
AIRFIELD#2
VOLCANIC ASH BEACHES
TACHIIWA POINT
QUARRY
AIRFIELD#1
EAST BOAT BASIN
VOLCANIC ASH BEACHES
1 2 1 2 BLUE
1 2 YELLOW
IWO JIMA
1 2 RED
GREEN
FUTATSU ROCK
TOBIISHI POINT
MOUNT SURABACHI
0 1000 2000
YARDS

Iwo Jima.

tankers were converted into water carriers with 42,000,000 gallons of potable water capacity. Urgent efforts were made to get into commission and to Iwo Jima two distilling ships of 120,000 gallons daily distilling capacity, which were building.

Vice Admiral Turner was able to get, additionally, an LST modified into a small craft mother ship and given the fancy name of APB, the B standing for "Barracks." These APBs had enlarged diesel fuel oil and fresh water capacity, 235,000 gallons and 119,000 respectively; dry, frozen and fresh provisions for issue, totaling 450 tons; and considerable spare berthing and messing capacity. Berthing and messing were to be available on an around-the-clock basis for survivors from ships or craft sunk, or for personnel of small amphibious boats separated from their normal transport home.[38]

Contrary to the sweet songs of the weather prophets, the planners added this dirge in regard to the prospective tasks of the logisticians:

> The northwest seas and winds, which prevail from November through March will interfere at times with unloading on northwest beaches. Likewise prevalence of south and easterly seas and swells from April to October will preclude uninterrupted use of the excellent beaches on the southeast coast, and may interfere with the considered construction of an artificial harbor in this sector. These difficulties, together with the fact that there is no well protected harbour or anchorage on any coast, will add greatly to the unloading problem. . . .

Vice Admiral Turner forecast:

> Unloading ships will be difficult at all times, except when ships are close inshore.[39]

The forecast would have been more nearly correct had he placed a period after "times."

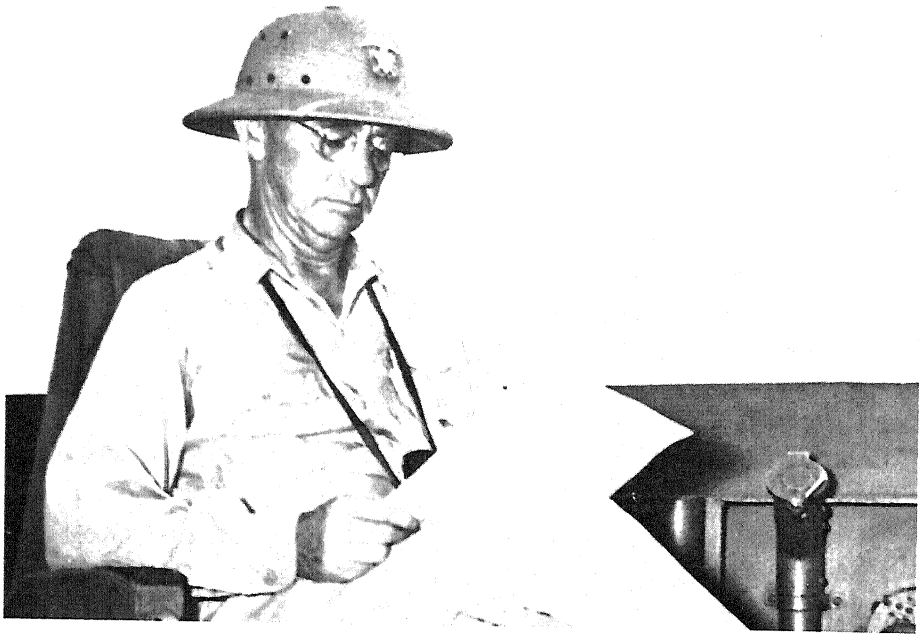
THE JAPANESE DEFENDERS

In October 1944, CINCPAC had estimated that there were 13,000 Japanese troops on Iwo. CINCPAC also estimated the three Japanese airfields on Iwo Jima would be captured by Dog Day plus ten. Both estimates were on the optimistic side, but the latter was reasonably close.

By this October date, the Japanese had been militarily in the Bonin Islands

[38] *USS Presque Island* (APB-44), Action Report, 1 May 1945.

[39] (a) CINCPAC Joint Staff Study DETACHMENT, 16 Nov. 1944, p. 38; (b) COMPHIBSPAC Op Plan A25–44, Annex B, para. 14.



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Vice Admiral Turner, Commander Joint Expeditionary Force (TF 51), studies staff memorandum enroute to the assault on Iwo Jima.

for thirty years, starting at Chichi Jima with a naval radio and seaplane base. Twenty years later, the main Japanese defensive effort was shifted to Iwo Jima because of that island's adaptability to land plane air operations. However, Chichi Jima was not neglected, as the Japanese had some 9,000 army troops and 5,000 naval personnel at Chichi Jima when the War in the Pacific was over, and these troops could be counted at surrender time. According to Japanese sources, way back on 31 May 1944, the Japanese had 7,000 Army and Navy personnel on Iwo Jima, but more importantly, they had 14 coast defense guns of 4-inch or larger and 32 anti-aircraft guns. These were just a sound foundation for their later defensive effort.[40]

Immediately after the invasion of Saipan in mid-June 1944, the Japanese inaugurated a major crash effort to build up Iwo Jima defensively, as well as other islands in the Nanpo Shoto chain.

By August 1944, the lower Marianas were lost to Japan along with all

[40] (a) CINCPAC Joint Staff Study DETACHMENT, p. 7; (b) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 170–45 7 Jul. 1945, Translations, Interrogations No. 35; (c) CINCPAC-CINCPOA-Bulletin No. 2–46, Field Survey of Japanese Defenses on Chichi Jima, 15 Feb. 1946.

the top command organization of the 31st Japanese Army to which the Bonin-Volcano Islands had been assigned. A new commander, Lieutenant-General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, was ordered and the 109th Division was moved to the defense of the Volcano-Bonin Islands. The naval forces on Iwo Jima, consisting of the 27th Air Flotilla, the Naval Guard Force manning the coast defense and anti-aircraft batteries, and a Naval Construction Battalion, were commanded by Rear Admiral Toshinosuke Ichimaru, a naval aviator. More than three-quarters of the defending anti-aircraft guns were naval.

When Vice Admiral Turner issued his Intelligence Plan for DETACHMENT, he stated in paragraph 1:

> The Island is garrisoned with a balanced organization of Army and Navy troops and construction personnel, the total numbering between 13,000 and 14,000. Approximately 1,050 civilians live on the island. Adequate supplies are believed to be on hand for the garrison.

This was in error because all the civilians had been evacuated. Total defenders, including Koreans and natives of Iwo in the construction battalion, reportedly numbered over 20,000.[41] Exact numbers are not available from Japanese records, because of the loss of Japanese military personnel and their records enroute to the island, thanks to our submarines.

While the Japanese troops had been closely estimated, the number of Japanese naval personnel had been put at from 1,000 to 1,750. Documents captured during the battle indicated that the naval units including construction personnel and Korean laborers actually totaled 7,015.[42]

JAPANESE DEFENSE PLAN

The final Japanese defense plan for Iwo Jima was based on holding relatively lightly the volcanic sand beaches but covering them heavily by all types of fire from strongly fortified defensive positions around Mount Suribachi and the Motoyama Plateau area. Despite this overall plan, the entire slope of the beaches was covered by fire trenches and pillboxes, as well as rifle and machine gun pits. Near the ends of the beaches, there were reinforced concrete block houses and pillboxes with walls up to four feet thick, built so as to deliver damaging flanking fire as our troops moved away

[41] Whitman S. Bartley, *Iwo Jima, Amphibious Epic,* U.S. Marine Corps, Monograph (Washington: Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1950), Appendix VI.

[42] CTF 56 Iwo Jima Action Report, Encl. (C), G-2 Report, Dog Plus Two.

from the beaches. Mutually supporting defensive positions were built on Mount Suribachi and on the Motoyama Plateau. Guns, rockets, and mortars of all types and sizes were placed therein. A few of the 24 tanks were so located on the Motoyama Plateau as to provide a spearhead for local counter-attacks. A good many of their guns were found dug in at the entrances to caves. The Japanese backed up their defensive positions with an elaborate system of interconnecting tunnels.

Great effort was made, and considerable success obtained, by the Japanese in their desire to camouflage or conceal their defensive positions.

The Japanese fighting spirit on Iwo Jima had reached a high crescendo, urged on by such exhortations as that of a senior Japanese officer who wrote before the battle:

> We must inculcate a spirit that will not stop short of victory, maintaining a faith in self-sacrifice for the common cause, and determining to work with burning eagerness and high morale for the strengthening of mind and body, the perfection of military skill and training,. and the increase of military preparation.

The same enthusiastic thoughts were expressed in the diary of a second lieutenant serving on Iwo Jima.

> . . . let us live on to the end and hit the enemy headlong. We must live on, right or wrong, and keep striking until we have delivered the coup de grace to the last stubborn enemy and wiped the Anglo-Saxons from the face of the earth.[43]

The Japanese had learned that they could not hold open beaches against naval gunfire, but they planned to make it very expensive in men and material to land on these beaches or to move off of them.

Of prime interest to the gunners of the Expeditionary Force, by the time the delays taking place in the operations in the Philippines had ended and the Iwo Jima operation could proceed, the Japanese had markedly increased their defensive guns and mortars on Iwo Jima.

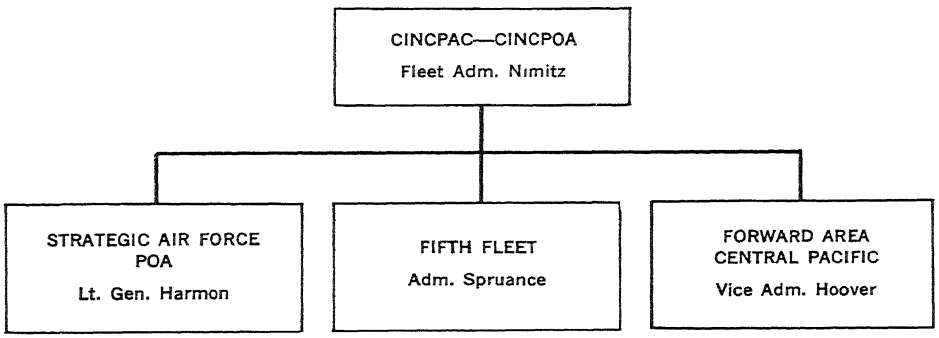
The positions of not all of these were known to the gunners of the Expeditionary Force, but a piece of paper issued by Commander Fifth Amphibious Corps on 13 February, giving the results of air reconnaissance through 10 February 1945, listed the following:

[43] (a) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Translation Bulletin No. 170–45, Captured document, Colonel Kaido, Commanding Officer Artillery Group 2nd Mixed Brigade, Inspection Remarks—Iwo Jima, 11 Dec. 1944; (b) Second Lieutenant Kubota, Diary Captured on Iwo Jima.

Coast defense guns	6
Dual-purpose guns	42
Automatic anti-aircraft	203
Covered artillery	67
Open artillery	5
Anti-tank, anti-boat guns	3
Machine guns	292

ORGANIZATION FOR DETACHMENT

Since the naval organization, the Fifth Fleet (Task Force 50), for accomplishing DETACHMENT, was charged with assault-landing a full corps of Marines, it bore much resemblance to that for the Marianas operation, insofar as the amphibians were concerned. On an overall basis, however, there was some difference. The long-range heavy bombers of the Strategic Air Force, Pacific Ocean Areas (Task Force 93), and the shore-based air, including anti-submarine coverage and air-sea rescue units, of Task Force 94 (Forward Area, Central Pacific), under Fleet Admiral Nimitz's coordination, directly supported the Fifth Fleet. The largest unit of the Fifth Fleet was the Joint Expeditionary Force under Vice Admiral Turner.[44]



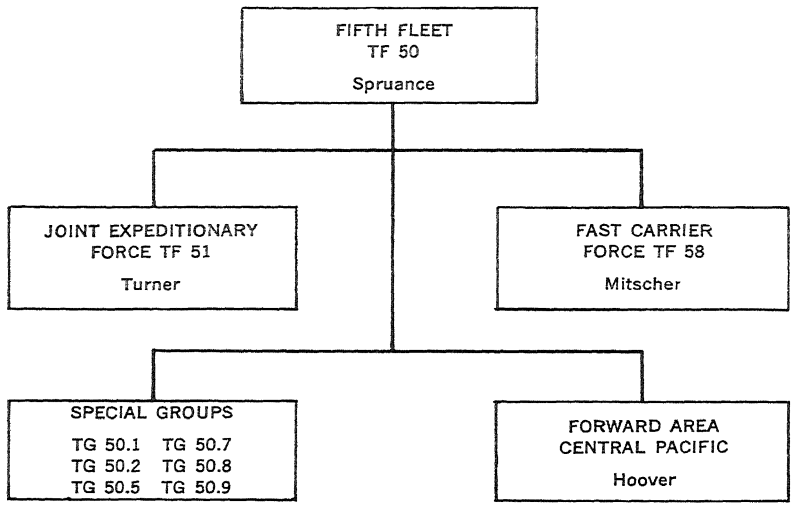
Additional direct support of various types for the DETACHMENT Operation came from both within and without the Pacific Fleet. The Commanding General, 14th Air Force based in the China Theater and the Commander North Pacific Force based in the Alaskan area conducted extended air searches in their faraway sectors. Commander Submarine Force and Commander Service Force, with task units operating primarily from the

[44] (a) Admiral Nimitz was promoted to Fleet Admiral on 19 December 1944; (b) CINCPOA Op Plan 11–44, 25 Nov. 1944; (c) Commander Fifth Fleet Op Plan 13–44, 31 Dec. 1944.

Pearl Harbor area provided, respectively, reconnaissance coupled with air-sea rescue and broad logistic support. The Commanding General, 20th Air Force provided general support by air bombing on Japan proper. The Commanding General, Southwest Pacific Force, provided long-range reconnaissance over the Western Pacific from Leyte and Mindoro in the Philippines as air bases there became available for this purpose.

THE BALL CARRIERS

The Fifth Fleet was organized as follows:



The Special Groups were a new organization in our amphibious operation plans although their tasks were not new. Each group performed an essential, if minor, support task for the mighty Fifth Fleet, as the titles indicate.

50.1 Fleet Flagship—*Indianapolis*—Captain C. B. McVay (1920)
50.2 Relief Fleet Flagship—*Missouri*—Captain W. M. Callaghan (1919)
50.5 Search and Reconnaissance Group—Commodore D. Ketcham (1920)
50.7 Anti-Submarine Warfare Group—Captain G. C. Montgomery (1924)
50.8 Logistic Support Group—Rear Admiral D. B. Beary (1910)
50.9 Service Squadron Ten—Commodore W. R. Carter (1908)

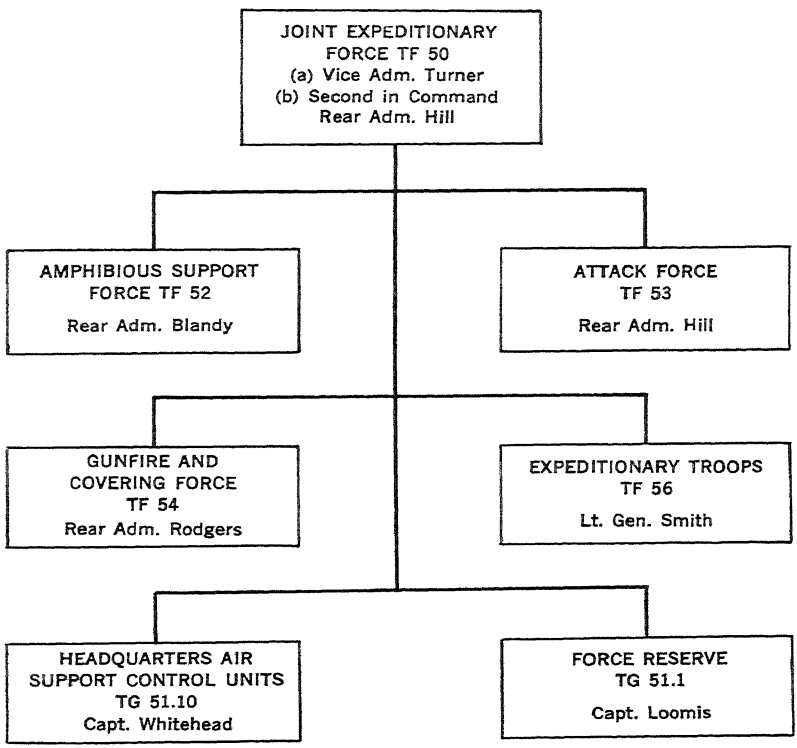
The Search and Reconnaissance Group consisted of about 150 long-range

naval reconnaissance aircraft, either seaplanes or amphibian planes, together with their supporting tenders.

The Logistic Support Group of about fifty ships which included six jeep carriers, along with oilers, ammunition, store and refrigeration ships, and a protective anti-submarine screen was ordered to provide replacement aircraft and aircraft crews as well as essential supply items.

Service Squadron Ten contained over 260 ships and craft and included repair ships, destroyer tenders, fresh water carriers and miscellaneous service ships to handle emergency repairs as well as battle damage and seaborne hospitalization.

For DETACHMENT, 495 ships were attached to TF 51 and employed by Commander, Expeditionary Force, in the initial assault and the First Garrison Echelon. There were 75,144 Army, Navy, and Marine personnel in the Landing Force, with 70,647 being Marines. Without naming or listing all the ships and craft in this massive Expeditionary Force, it seems worth summarizing that there were 43 attack transports, 16 attack cargo ships, 63 LSTs, and 58 LCIs besides 18 of the LCI gunboats, now designated LCS.



The new organizational features of the Expeditionary Force were two. The most important was the gathering into one task group of all the ships which were to furnish, in the immediate period before Dog Day: (a) pinpoint air, gun and mortar bombardment; (b) minesweeping, netting and buoying; and (c) beach reconnaissance and its attendant underwater demolition. This group was designated Task Force 52, the Amphibious Support Force. Rear Admiral W. H. P. Blandy was given this command. The Amphibious Support Force included an Air Support Group with eight jeep carriers, an Air Support Control Unit, an Underwater Demolition Group and a Gunboat Mortar Support Group with rocket LCIs and gun LCI units. To permit him to accomplish his heavy gun bombardment task CTF 52 was authorized to draw on an offensive Gunfire and Covering Force (Task Force 54) of six battleships, five cruisers and their anti-submarine screens. Rear Admiral Bertram J. Rodgers commanded Task Force 54.

As will be noted from the diagram on page 977, Vice Admiral Turner turned over the command of the actual amphibious assault, lock, stock and barrel, to his designated Second-in-Command, Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill. This was consonant with the increased magnitude of the overall amphibious task to be accomplished, as well as with the increased amphibious assault experience of the Second-in-Command.

The more detailed organization of the naval part of Expeditionary Force was contained in CTF 51's 435-page Operation Plan A25–44, to which in due time were added 50 pages of changes and errata.

The Landing Force (TG 56.1) was from the Fifth Amphibious Corps. It was made up of the Fourth Marine Division and the Fifth Marine Division with the Third Marine Division in reserve. It was commanded by Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC. This was the first time in the Central Pacific campaign that a three division tactical corps, made up only of Marines, and commanded by a Marine officer was to take the field.

Major General Clifton B. Cates, USMC, commanded the Fourth Division and Major General Keller E. Rockey, USMC, the Fifth Division. Major General Graves B. Erskine, USMC, commanded the Third Marine Division and the Expeditionary Troops Reserve.

Consonant with the prior procedure of listing the Commanding Officers in the Assault Force of the Expeditionary Force, and because the smaller amphibious ships and craft in DETACHMENT are not listed individually in Morison or other books on the Iwo Jima campaign, this will be done again, but only for the amphibious types.

The Attack Force, TF 53, under Rear Admiral Hill and in the new command ship *Auburn* (AGC-10), Captain R. O. Myers (1921), was organized as follows:

(A) *T.G. 53.1 TRANSPORT GROUP ABLE*—Commodore John B. McGovern (Transport Squadron 16) (1921)

T.U. 53.1.1 TRANSPORT DIVISION 46—Commodore McGovern

APA-96 *Cecil* (GF) Captain G. D. Lyon (1921)
APA-160 *Deuel* (F) Captain D. G. McMillan (1926)
APA-121 *Hocking* Commander C. D. Schutz, USNR
APA-159 *Darke* Captain Mc F. W. Wood (1923)
AP-77 *Thurston* Captain R. B. Vanasse (1921A)
AKA-64 *Tolland* Captain E. J. Kingsland, USNR
AKA-90 *Whiteside* Commander C. P. Woodson (1921)

T.U. 53.1.2 TRANSPORT DIVISION 47 Captain A. S. Wotherspoon (1915)

APA-192 *Rutland* (F) Commander F. K. O'Brien (1914)
APA-70 *Cartaret* Lieutenant Commander J. L. Hunter, USN
APA-106 *Hansford* Commander W. A. Lynch (1921)
APA-119 *Highlands* Commander M. Toal, USNR
APA-194 *Sandoval* Commander R. C. Scherrer (1922)
AKA-91 *Whitley* Commander A. C. Thompson, USNR
AKA-93 *Yancey* Lieutenant Commander E. R. Rice, USNR

T.U. 53.1.3 TRANSPORT DIVISION 48 Captain C. L. Andrews (1919)

APA-208 *Talladega* (F) Captain E. H. McMenemy (1920)
APA-161 *Dickens* Captain R. M. Ingram, USNR
APA-195 *Lenawee* Captain A. J. Detzer (1921)
APA-197 *Lubbock* Commander T. J. Butler, USNR
APA-211 *Missoula* Commander A. C. Kopper, USNR
AKA-68 *Stokes* Lieutenant Commander G. W. Graber, USNR
AKA-22 *Athene* Commander E. R. Nelson (1933)
LSD-5 *Gunston Hall* Lieutenant W. F. Bentley, USNR (temporary)

T.U. 56.2.1 ABLE LANDING GROUP Major General Rockey Fifth Marine Division, plus attached units

(B) *T.G. 53.2 TRANSPORT GROUP BAKER* (TRANSPORT SQUADRON 15) Commodore H. C. Flanagan (1921)

T.U. 53.2.1 TRANSPORT DIVISION 43 Commodore H. C. Flanagan (1921)

APA-33 *Bayfield* (GF) Captain W. R. Richards, USCG
APA-62 *Berrien* Lieutenant Commander J. M. Gallagher, USNR

APA-118 *Hendry* Captain R. C. Welles (1921)
APA-156 *Mellette* Commander F. H. Spring, USNR
APA-206 *Sibley* Commander E. I. McQuiston (1921)
AKA-21 *Artemis* Lieutenant Commander E. A. Rattray, USNR
AKA-65 *Shoshone* Lieutenant Commander S. E. Melville, USNR
LSV-2 *Ozark* Captain F. P. Williams (1925)

T.U. 53.2.2 TRANSPORT DIVISION 44 Captain J. H. Seyfried (1921)
APA-120 *Hinsdale* (F) Commander E. F. Beyer, USNR
APA-63 *Bladen* Lieutenant Commander W. P. Hartung, USNR
APA-157 *Napa* Commander G. F. Forster, USNR
APA-190 *Pickens* Commander J. V. McElduff (1920)
APA-193 *Sanborn* Commander S. Huguenin, USNR
AKA-63 *Southampton* Lieutenant Commander L. V. Cooke, USNR
AKA-67 *Starr* Commander F. O. Goldsmith (1921)
LSD-2 *Belle Grove* Commander M. Seavey, USNR

T.U. 53.2.3 TRANSPORT DIVISION 45 Captain A. C. J. Sabalot (1920)
APA-196 *Logan* (F) Commander J. H. Foley (1923)
APA-61 *Barrow* Commander F. S. Holmes (1918)
APA-154 *Lowndes* Commander C. H. Perdue, USNR
APA-158 *Newberry* Commander D. R. Phoebus, USNR
APA-207 *Mifflin* Commander L. J. Modave, USNR
AKA-60 *Leo* Commander T. E. Healy, USNR
AKA-61 *Muliphen* Commander W. W. Williamson, USNR
LSD-1 *Ashland* Lieutenant Commander W. A. Caughey, USNR

T.U. 56.2.2 BAKER LANDING GROUP Major General C. B. Cates, USMC
Fourth Marine Division, plus attached units

(C) *T.G. 53.3 TRACTOR FLOTILLA* Captain W. H. Brereton (1924)
FLOTILLA FLAGSHIPS
DD-802 *Gregory* Commander B. McCandless (1932)
LCI(L)-994 Lieutenant M. H. Vereeke, USNR

T.U. 53.3.1 TRACTOR GROUP ABLE Commander P. Niekum, USN (Ret.) (1926)
GROUP FLAGSHIPS
DD-803 *Little* Commander M. Hall (1931)
LCI(L)-995 Lieutenant (jg) J. E. Favell, USNR

T.U. 53.3.2 LST UNIT ONE Commander W. M. Gullett (1927)
LST-756 (GF) Lieutenant F. L. Daum, USNR
LST-241 Lieutenant A. N. Firestone, USNR
LST-354 Lieutenant C. A. Johnson, USNR
LST-588 Lieutenant S. B. Fulweiler, USNR

LST-643 Lieutenant E. Windward, USNR
LST-715 Lieutenant R. I. Trapp, USN
LST-929 (H) Lieutenant C. S. Strickler, USNR

T.U. 53.3.3 LST UNIT TWO Commander C. R. Lea, USNR
LST-449 (F) Lieutenant (jg) J. E. Britain, USNR
LST-70 Lieutenant B. P. Devins, USCGR
LST-390 Lieutenant J. B. Maury, USNR
LST-481 Lieutenant W. L. Boyer, USNR
LST-634 Lieutenant Tomboy Little, USN
LST-758 Lieutenant F. J. Molenda, USCG
LST-1033 (H) Lieutenant J. W. Robinson, USNR

T.U. 53.3.4 TRACTOR GROUP BAKER Captain W. H. Brereton (1924)

T.U. 53.3.5 LST UNIT THREE Commander R. M. MacKinnon (1924)
LST-587 (GF) Lieutenant H. H. Hough, USNR
LST-642 Lieutenant R. J. Schaefer, USNR
LST-716 Lieutenant P. H. Shea, USNR
LST-723 Lieutenant B. H. Wallace, USN
LST-761 Lieutenant C. N. Huff, USCGR
LST-812 Lieutenant F. J. Sullivan, USNR
LST-930 (H) Lieutenant F. W. Grabowski, USN

T.U. 53.3.6 LST UNIT FOUR Commander S. A. Lief, USNR (1931)
LST-713 (F) Lieutenant C. N. Moore, USNR
LST-684 Lieutenant P. B. Welch, Jr., USNR
LST-731 Lieutenant K. S. McCann, Jr., USN
LST-787 Lieutenant W. S. Lawrence, USCGR
LST-789 Lieutenant H. M. Mulvey, USCG
LST-928 Lieutenant C. R. Stearns, USNR
LST-931 (H) Lieutenant E. L. Berenbach, USNR

T.U. 53.3.7 TRACTOR GROUP CHARLIE Captain C. H. Peterson, USCG

GROUP FLAGSHIPS
DD-804 *Rooks* Commander J. A. McGoldrick (1932)
LCI(L)-998 Lieutenant W. J. Huff, USNR

T.U. 53.3.8 LST UNIT FIVE Commander S. R. Sands, USCG
LST-760 (GF) Lieutenant R. T. A. McKenzie, USCG
LST-648 Lieutenant Commander C. F. Rabell, USNR
LST-726 Lieutenant J. M. Alper, USNR
LST-763 Lieutenant A. W. Meekins, USCG
LST-764 Lieutenant R. F. Nichols, USCG
LST-779 Lieutenant J. A. Hopkins, USNR
LST-784 Lieutenant D. H. Miner, USCG
LST-792 Lieutenant C. M. Garrett, USCGR
LST-1032 Lieutenant J. M. Medina, USNR

T.U. 53.3.9 LST UNIT SIX Commander W. B. Millington, USCG
LST-782 (F) Lieutenant H. C. Slack, USCGR
LST-42 Lieutenant J. W. Forbis, USNR
LST-121 Lieutenant E. D. Godfrey, USNR
LST-224 Lieutenant J. M. Beall, USNR
LST-399 Lieutenant (jg) F. J. Dever, USNR
LST-785 Lieutenant M. E. Nichol, USCG
LST-795 Lieutenant M. H. Jackson, USCGR
LST-807 Lieutenant G. D. Straight, USN
LST-940 Lieutenant G. F. Leedy, USN

T.G. 53.4 LSM FLOTILLA Commander W. H. Carpenter
FLOTILLA FLAGSHIP LCI(L) 628 Lieutenant C. F. Higgins, USNR

(D) *T.G. 53.4 LSM FLOTILLA* Commander W. H. Carpenter (1926) USNR
LSM-264 (GF) Lieutenant F. M. Parrish, USNR
LSM-43 Lieutenant C. R. Hooff, Jr., USNR
LSM-44 Lieutenant B. A. Rubin, USNR
LSM-46 Lieutenant F. R. Edwards, USNR
LSM-47 Lieutenant F. J. Chokel, USNR
LSM-49 Lieutenant R. Greenwood, USN
LSM-92 Lieutenant J. Grandin, USNR
LSM-140 Lieutenant R. F. Duff, USNR
LSM-141 Lieutenant E. A. Quinlan, USNR
LSM-242 Lieutenant (jg) C. O. Gardner, USNR
LSM-261 Lieutenant A. J. Smith, Jr., USNR
LSM-266 Lieutenant W. H. Rutledge, USNR

T.U. 53.4.2 LSM UNIT BAKER Lieutenant Commander A. E. Lind, USNR
LSM-60 (GF) Lieutenant W. W. Doar, USNR
LSM-48 Lieutenant M. T. Graugnard, USNR
LSM-59 Lieutenant D. C. Hawley, USNR
LSM-70 Lieutenant R. C. Whalin, USN
LSM-74 Lieutenant S. M. Prewitt, USNR
LSM-126 Lieutenant G. E. Stricker, USNR
LSM-145 Lieutenant R. P. Palmer, USNR
LSM-201 Lieutenant A. J. Buchinsky, USNR
LSM-202 Lieutenant D. Thurlow, USNR
LSM-206 Lieutenant G. C. MacKenzie, USNR
LSM-207 Lieutenant R. Allman, USNR
LSM-211 Lieutenant H. R. Geyelin, USNR
LSM-216 Lieutenant C. P. Haber, USNR
LSM-238 Lieutenant D. M. McIntosh, USNR
LSM-239 Lieutenant E. W. Jokisch, USNR

LSM-241 Lieutenant W. T. Brooks, USNR
LSM-260 Lieutenant R. J. Grier, II, USNR
LSM-323 Lieutenant J. C. Watt, USNR

(E) *T.G. 53.5 CONTROL GROUP* Captain Bruce B. Adell (1922)
T.U. 53.5.1 CENTRAL CONTROL GROUP Captain Bruce B. Adell
PCE-877 Lieutenant J. R. Shea, USNR
PC(S)-1403 Lieutenant J. M. Cherry, Jr., USNR
PC(S)-1421 Lieutenant (jg) E. T. Freeman, USNR
T.U. 53.5.2 CONTROL UNIT ABLE Lieutenant Commander L. D. Dawes
PC(S)-1460 Lieutenant F. W. Lamb, USNR
PC(S)-1461 Lieutenant W. S. Harrison, USNR
SC-1049 Lieutenant D. C. Adams, USNR
SC-1298 Lieutenant (jg) H. J. Hebner, USNR
SC-1314 Lieutenant (jg) J. F. Schweidler, USNR
T.U. 53.5.3 CONTROL GREEN Lieutenant J. F. Sexton
PC-463 Lieutenant J. E. Palmer, USNR
SC-1315 Lieutenant (jg) R. V. Weddle, USNR
T.U. 53.5.4 CONTROL RED Lieutenant Bell
PC-469 Lieutenant (jg) S. B. Kurta, USNR
SC-1316 Lieutenant (jg) C. F. Allen, Jr., USNR
T.U. 53.5.5 CONTROL UNIT BAKER Lieutenant Commander B. Wheeler
PC(S)-1452 Ensign J. S. Simms, USNR
PC(S)-1455 Lieutenant C. F. Cort, USNR
SC-1066 Lieutenant (jg) A. A. Bull, USNR
SC-1272 Lieutenant L. M. Walker, USNR
SC-1360 Lieutenant (jg) H. S. Howes, USNR
T.U. 53.5.6 CONTROL YELLOW Lieutenant Commander B. Henderson
PC-578 Lieutenant (jg) C. D. Chalfant, USNR
SC-1326 Lieutenant E. Hamilton, USNR
T.U. 53.5.7 CONTROL BLUE Lieutenant C. H. Wheatley
PC-1081 Lieutenant (jg) Paul E. Lavietes, USNR
SC-1374 Ensign R. L. McKenna, USNR

(F) *T.G. 53.6 BEACH PARTY GROUP* Captain Carl E. Anderson, USNR
SC-724 (GF) Lieutenant (jg) R. H. Bogarte, USNR
53.6.1 BEACH PARTY UNIT ABLE Commander W. S. Trapnell, USNR
Assigned Beach Party
53.6.2 BEACH PARTY UNIT BAKER Lieutenant-Commander W. J. Lippincott, USNR
Assigned Beach Party

(G) *T.G. 53.7 PONTOON BARGE, CAUSEWAY AND LCT GROUP* Lieutenant Commander Thomas F. Ryan, USNR
LCI(L)-425 (GF) Lieutenant (jg) C. H. Bergesson, USNR

T.U. 53.7.1 PONTOON BARGE UNIT ABLE Lieutenant F. J. Elmiger, USNR

Sixteen 3′ x 12′ barges when launched from
LST-760 Lieutenant R. T. A. McKenzie, USCG
LST-779 Lieutenant J. A. Hopkins, USNR
LST-930 Lieutenant F. W. Grabowski, USN
LST-931 Lieutenant E. L. Berenbach, USNR

T.U. 53.7.2 PONTOON BARGE UNIT BAKER Lieutenant (jg) J. J. Knoll

Twelve 3 x 12 barges when launched from
LST-784 Lieutenant D. H. Miner, USCG
LST-929 Lieutenant C. S. Strickler, USNR
LST-1033 Lieutenant J. W. Robinson, USNR

T.U. 53.7.3 CAUSEWAY UNIT ABLE Lieutenant Lewis

Three Causeway sets (each 2-2 x 30 causeways) when launched from
LST-588 Lieutenant S. B. Fulweiler, USNR
LST-758 Lieutenant F. J. Molenda, USCGR
LST-761 Lieutenant C. N. Huff, USCG

T.U. 53.7.4 CAUSEWAY UNIT BAKER Lieutenant (jg) I. P. Judy

Three Causeway sets (each 2′ x 30′ causeways) when launched from
LST-763 Lieutenant A. W. Meekins, USCG
LST-764 Lieutenant R. F. Nichols, USCG
LST-787 Lieutenant W. S. Lawrence, USCGR

T.U. 53.7.5 LCT UNITS Lieutenant R. T. Capeless, USNR

LCI(L)-423 (GF) Lieutenant Joe D. Norvell, USNR

T.U. 53.7.6 LCT UNIT ABLE Lieutenant R. T. Capeless, USNR

LCT-630 loaded on LST-715 Lieutenant R. I. Trapp, USN
LCT-631 loaded on LST-731 Lieutenant K. S. McCann, Jr., USN
LCT-632 loaded on LST-756 Lieutenant F. L. Daum, USNR
LCT-866 loaded on LST-713 Lieutenant C. N. Moore, USNR
LCT-1028 loaded on LST-684 Lieutenant P. B. Welch, Jr., USNR
LCT-1029 loaded on GUNSTON HALL Commander D. E. Collins, USNR (Lieutenant W. P. Bentley, temporary)

T.U. 53.7.7 LCT UNIT BAKER Ensign Kenneth L. Dorton

LCT-1030 loaded on LST-782 Lieutenant H. C. Slack, USCGR
LCT-1031 loaded on LST-1032 Lieutenant J. M. Medina, USNR
LCT-1055 loaded on LST-634 Lieutenant T. Little, USN
LCT-1154 loaded on LST-716 Lieutenant P. H. Shea, USNR
LCT-1269 loaded on LST-812 Lieutenant F. J. Sullivan, USNR
LCT-1404 loaded on LST-648 Lieutenant Commander C. F. Rabell, USNR

T.U. 53.8 SMALL CRAFT GROUP Lieutenant Commander Nelson
LCI(L)-1029 Lieutenant (jg) J. H. Lusk, USNR
LCI(G)-438 Lieutenant (jg) T. S. Youmans, USNR
LCI(G)-441 Lieutenant (jg) F. W. Bell, USNR
LST(M)-676 Lieutenant P. N. Monroe, USNR
LST(M)-678 Lieutenant C. E. Beatty, USNR
T.U. 53.8.1 SMALL BOAT UNIT
Small boats as assigned
(I) *T.G. 53.9*
Mentioned, but no data indicating constituency, and no reports therefrom located.[45]

Thirty-one LSTs carried LCTs but only the LCTs listed above were to be launched at the objective, as ordered by Command Attack Force.

A NEW AMPHIBIOUS NAVY

Old Task Force 62 which sailed so proudly forth to assault Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942, numbered 51 ships. Task Force 51 numbered 495 ships—ten times as large.

The call on the amphibious resources of the Pacific Fleet had just barely been met by using for assault operations every new amphibious ship as it rolled down the production line, slid into the water, and steamed towards the mid-Pacific.

Amphibious ships and their landing craft could be built faster than the officers and seamen to man them and their landing craft could be trained to do their difficult tasks. There was no lack of desire to do the correct thing at the correct time in the correct manner. There was only a lack of acquired skill.

[45] [1] Year dates appearing after names are Naval Academy Class year or year of first commission in the regular Navy. Where no year date and no USNR or USCG, or USCGR, then a temporary officer.

[2] Names as given in January 1, 1945 Organization of PACIFIC FLEET, or if not given therein, the 1 May 1945 PACFLEET Confidential NOTICE 3CN-45

[3] LST(H) were those LSTs designated as the first stop off the beaches for emergency handling of the wounded. They were provided with doctors, and essential equipment.

[4] Names of Officers in Charge of LCTs could not be located in the Naval Historical Division or the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

[5] LCI(L) 425 operated as Flagships for both CTG 53.7 and CTU 53.7.5 in lieu of LCI(L) 772 and LCI(L) 423 previously designated.

[6] Where initials of officers do not appear, these were not listed in the written orders, and no report from the ship, craft, or unit could be located, the officer could not be further identified, although considerable effort was spent on this.

To illustrate, Commander Transport Division 45 reported that of the five APAs, two AKAs, and one LSD in his division, only the LSD had been in commission more than six months on the date of the assault landing, 19 February 1945. None, except the LSD, had participated in a prior assault.[46]

The problem of untried personnel was mentioned by many.

> Since this was the initial task of this ship and few aboard had previously participated in amphibious operations, briefing was done more from doctrine and plans, than experience. . . .[47]

In a personal letter dated 3 February 1945 to Rear Admiral L. E. Denfeld, who was the number two in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, this statement of Vice Admiral Turner occurs:

> In the operation we have just embarked on, all but one of the transports are *brand new*, with only a few captains who have ever (in junior positions) been on such an operation. The four Transdiv Commanders are on their first operation; and the only experienced officers in the transports are the two Transron Commanders, McGovern and Flanagan.[48]

THE SCHEME OF MANEUVER

The Scheme of Maneuver called for landing two divisions abreast on the southeastern beaches of Iwo Jima, the Fourth Marine Division on the right, and the Fifth Marine Division on the left. The Fifth Marine Division was to drive across the island and then swing to the northeast. At this same time, a Regimental Combat Team of this division was to swing left and take Mount Suribachi. The right flank of the Fourth Division was to wheel to the right and head for the Quarry and East Boat Basin while the rest of the Fourth Division was to push in towards the center of the island, overrun the main airfield [Airfield No. 1], and then to wheel to the northeast and head for Motoyama Plateau and Airfield No. 2, located thereon.

The Third Marine Division, when and as released by the Expeditionary Troop Commander, would land over the same southeastern beaches either to assist in the attack or to occupy defensive positions.

REHEARSALS

Except for the Third Division, the Expeditionary Troop Reserve, the Marines slated for the DETACHMENT Operation were in the Hawaiian

[46] COMTRANSDIV 45, Action Report, 12 Mar. 1945, para. 5.
[47] *USS Darke* (APA-159), Iwo Jima Action Report, 4 Mar. 1945, p. 1.
[48] RKT to LED, letter, 3 Feb. 1945.



80-G-307685

"Every Man a Lookout."

Islands. The preliminary rehearsals, including actual landings on designated days and then simulated landings with actual gunfire and air support on other days, were held in Lahaina Roads from 11 to 18 January 1945. Due to the operational requirements of the Luzon landings of the Philippine campaign commencing 9 January 1945, most of the designated naval gunfire ships and air support units could not participate in the Lahaina Roads rehearsal.

Task Force 52, the Amphibious Support Force for DETACHMENT, assembled for preliminary training at Ulithi as the ships and units became available in the Western Pacific. Then all of Task Force 51, except the Expeditionary Troop Reserve, TG 51.1, and the Underwater Demolition Group, TG 52.4, held a partial rehearsal in the Saipan-Tinian Area on 11–13 February 1945. This followed the transfer of the Marines for the assault waves from the transports to the LSTs of the Tractor Groups. The Marianas rehearsal consisted of assault waves proceeding to within three hundred yards of the beach and simulated gunfire and air support.[49]

Major General Schmidt, USMC, Fifth Amphibious Corps Commander,

[49] (a) COMPHIBSPAC Training Orders A29–44, 21 Dec. 1944; A30–44, 29 Dec. 1944; (b) VAC DETACHMENT Operation Report, 20 May 1945.

thought the rehearsals in the Hawaiian Area: "were well executed," and that the absence of the naval gunfire ships and air support units "was overcome to some extent by a short rehearsal in the forward area."

At a much lower level, the rehearsal was appreciated greatly.

> The rehearsal was invaluable to the personnel of this ship in showing the part we would play and our general position in the Scheme of Things.[50]

That the Hawaiian rehearsal was reasonably realistic and much needed by the naval part of the amphibious team is attested by recording that eleven ships and craft collided or stranded during the rehearsal. Luckily only one, the LST-1031, which was beached, badly damaged, required replacement prior to movement to the Far Pacific.

During the Marianas rehearsal, the ocean was more than just a bit rough. One destroyer, the *Halford* (DD-480), was damaged and had to be returned to Pearl Harbor for repairs. Six amtracs were swamped and lost, and twelve LSTs suffered minor hull damage. Not all scheduled operations were carried out, particularly on 12 February 1945.

THE BOSS MAN ON THE SICK LIST

Vice Admiral Turner missed the rehearsals in Lahaina Roads due to a virus and the designated Second-in-Command, Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill, conducted them. The latter in his Action Report, labeled it "a very useful rehearsal."

In regard to the health of the Commander Expeditionary Force at this time, Admiral Hill wrote:

> He [Turner] had a bad back which required him to wear a heavy brace, but primarily, he had been driving himself so hard for the past two years that he had lost weight and looked badly. But he insisted that he was fine, and certainly his ability to get things done never showed any diminution of power.[51]

#1 SICK AGAIN

When the Expeditionary Force sailed from the Marianas:

> Turner had developed a new virus, or a recurrence of the old one, and in

[50] LSM-47 Action Report, 9 Mar. 1945, para. 2.
[51] Hill Memo of 17 Nov. 1966.

> my last talk with him, the day before our departure for Iwo, he was in bed with extremely high fever with a threat of pneumonia. I had never seen him so ill, and was deeply concerned. I begged him to take it easy and carry out the doctor's orders. . . .
>
> The Navy just couldn't afford to lose him. He assured me he would be careful, but also was very positive that he would be all right in plenty of time. And he was. That indomitable will power prevailed over virus and fever and before D-Day, he was back on his feet, carrying on as usual.[52]

The Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, had arrived aboard the flagship *Eldorado* to ride to Iwo Jima with Vice Admiral Turner, and this perhaps increased the speed of his recovery.

SHIP TO SHORE MOVEMENT

The designated beaches on the southeast shore of Iwo Jima covered 3,500 yards, and the two divisions abreast were to be landed on 3,000 yards of these beaches. There were seven beaches, each about five hundred yards wide from north to south along the southeast coast of Iwo Jima. They were designated from north to south Blue 2, Blue 1, Yellow 2, Yellow 1, Red 2, Red 1, and Green 1. It was planned to use all the designated beaches in the initial assault, except Blue 2, the right hand beach, which was too close to the Japanese quarry for comfort.

The eight battalion landing teams, including one in immediate back-up position for Green Beach One and the other in back-up on Blue Beach One, were embarked in 28 LSTs. They were to be landed in amtracs, preceded by the LVT(A)s, the amphibious tanks. The reserve battalions for the Blue, Yellow, and Red beaches were to be embarked in LCVPs and LCMs in Rendezvous Area near the Transport Area, ready to be called up and landed when needed.

LSMs carrying tanks and half-tracks, and the LSTs carrying the divisional artillery, were to be stationed between the Transport Area and the Line of Departure, ready to send their weapons ashore as needed and called for by the Marines.

A battleship and four destroyers were to be stationed between the Line of Departure and the beaches to provide close-in fire support of considerable volume and power, as the lead assault waves moved towards the beaches. Twenty-four gunboats (LCIs converted) carrying rockets, mortars or in-

[52] Hill Memo of 16 Nov. 1966.

creased 40-millimeter and 20-millimeter armament were to precede the assault waves by 600 yards as they moved toward the beaches.

About ten minutes before touchdown of the lead wave, the rocket gunboats were to fire an initial salvo of rockets, and between that moment and six minutes before the lead wave arrived at the beach, a second salvo. Twenty-millimeter and forty-millimeter guns were to be used freely to suppress any Japanese return fire. A 30-minute run from the Line of Departure to the beach was anticipated at the predicated amtrac speed of four knots.

Twice during the immediate pre-assault period, gunfire was to lift, and air strikes on the beach area were to take place. The lifting of the gunfire and the laying down of the air strikes was to be closely coordinated to prevent the long hiatus which had occurred at Tarawa.

By the time the actual landing was made, the firing ships available in the assault areas had their target areas redesignated, and the firing on the beach areas was considerably beefed up. This resulted in the heaviest pre-How Hour bombardment of the Pacific campaign. Four battleships, four cruisers, and eight destroyers fired on the east coast beaches and provided a modified rolling barrage, well controlled ahead of the Marines. In addition, one battleship and one heavy cruiser gave their exclusive attention to Mount Suribachi.

Sixty-eight LVT(A)s were in the lead wave, and 83 LVTs in Wave 2 with varying lesser number of craft in Waves 3 through Wave 5. Wave 6 on Green and Red beaches contained LCMs and LCVPs. Wave 6A consisted of LCTs and LSMs carrying tanks. Altogether 482 amtracs were to participate in the assault.

THE PRELIMINARIES

(A) Mines

In order to make any seaborne movement of Japanese troops from the Bonins to the Volcano Islands difficult and costly, 227 aircraft mines were laid in the harbor and anchorages of the Bonin Islands by the Strategic Air Force, Pacific Ocean Areas (TF 93) in a four-phase operation, between 6 November and 18 December 1944. The Strategic Air Force judged that about 80 percent of the mines were laid in effective locations. Most of the mines were laid at Chichi Jima and Haha Jima. There were many difficulties in carrying through this task, including the following, on 29 November:

> On the mine run at about 400 feet altitude on course 340°T, these two planes collided, the wing of one ramming the bombardier compartment of the other. The right plane pulled up and away sharply and its third mine carrying to the left, struck the side of the left plane between the waist and tail, penetrated the skin, slid along the control cables and came to rest on the camera hatch with its parachute dragging through the hole in the fuselage. . . . This mine was pried out through the hole it had made and fell without parachute. . . .[53]

A possible unwanted dividend from the mine-laying occurred later when one of our destroyers, the *David W. Taylor* (DD-551), struck a mine on 5 January 1945, about 7,000 yards off the harbor of Chichi Jima and well outside of the area our planes had presumably mined.

(B) Early Surface Gun Bombardments

Many of the pre-invasion bombardments of Iwo Jima were coordinated surface ship and air bombardments. Planes of the Strategic Air Force undertook to spot for the ships during some of the bombardments because there was no fighter cover for the cruiser spotting planes. Accuracy of spotting by these aircraft from the Strategic Air Force was varied since this was a new mission for the B-24s. Communications were difficult or impossible to establish, and the aircraft were tardy to very tardy in making their rendezvous.

The first large-scale gun bombardment of Iwo Jima took place on 11–12 November 1944, and subsequent surface ship gun bombardments occurred on 8, 24, and 27 December 1944, as well as 5 January and 24 January 1945. Most of these bombardments were conducted by Commander Cruiser Division Five (CTG 94.9), Rear Admiral Allen E. Smith, Commander.

The first surface ship bombardment on the night of 11–12 November 1944, was carried out by three heavy cruisers of Cruiser Division Five and five escorting destroyers of Destroyer Squadron Four. The mean range of the cruisers to targets was 16,000 yards; of the destroyers to targets, 12,000 yards. A clear, dark night favored the operation, but the only result claimed was several large explosions and subsequent fires.[54]

The 8 December action coordinated an attack of 218 planes with the

[53] COMGEN, Strategic Air Force, POA Report, 9 Dec. 1944, p. 3. See also reports of 10 Dec. and 23 Dec. 1944, and endorsements thereon.

[54] CTG 30.2 Action Report for 11–12 November, 19 Nov. 1944.



NR & L (M) 32992

Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal confers with assault commanders in USS Rocky Mount *off Iwo Jima, 22 February 1945. Left to right: Vice Admiral Turner, Secretary Forrestal, Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, and Rear Admiral Harry Hill.*

same heavy cruiser division and destroyer squadron and resulted in 950 tons of bombs and 300 tons of shells being expended on Iwo Jima.[55]

Cruiser Division Five and Destroyer Squadron Four returned to their target again on 24 and 27 December 1944, and again their operations were coordinated with an air strafing and air bombardment attack. Spotting reportedly was greatly improved since the same plane crews and spotters were available as used in the 8 December operation. However, the Japanese coastal defense batteries were positioned on elevated land, 150 feet to 250 feet above sea level and thoroughly revetted. This made the gunnery bombardment problem difficult, when not impossible.

No exaggerated claims were made for any of the surface gun bombardments by the surface ship elements. Commander Cruiser Division Five in answering the question "Did it Pay?" said: "The answer is a qualified 'yes.' "

[55] (a) CTG 94.9 Action Report for 8 December, 17 Dec. 1944; (b) *Pensacola* Action Report for 8 December, 10 Dec. 1944.

The Commanding Officer of the heavy cruiser *Pensacola*, a unit of Cruiser Division Four, opined:

> . . . It is considered that the extent to which defense installations on Iwo Jima may be destroyed by ship bombardment of this nature is somewhat limited.[56]

When the new battleship *Indiana*, as well as Cruiser Division Five and eight destroyer-type bombarded Iwo Jima on 24 January 1945, as part of another coordinated air-surface attack, the Area Commander stated:

> Although spotting was excellent and bombardment was generally in areas assigned, there is no appreciable evidence of damage to shore installations. The raid . . . did not pay off as well as expected.
> Five surface bombardments have not prevented the enemy use of Iwo Jima [airfields]
> About sixty percent of the surface bombardment progress was completed under ideal conditions. . . . However, at 1532 King, the heavy weather arrived completely shutting out the island both from the surface and from overhead and firing was suspended and finally cancelled.[57]

The purpose of this rather lengthy discussion of the pre-landing period surface bombardments and their coordination with B-24 air bombardments is to show that a real area bombardment effort was made to prepare Iwo Jima for the planned pinpoint air and gun bombardment by TF 52 and TF 54 of the Expeditionary Force. Despite this effort, there was a general lack of enthusiasm for the pre-landing surface bombardment results achieved from November 1944 through January 1945. This general lack of enthusiasm for the results achieved turned out to be really bad news for the assaulting Marines.

(C) Air Bombardment

The air bombardment of Iwo Jima began way back in June 1944, when planes from the fast carriers dumped 88 tons of bombs on that small island. By 1 February 1945, carrier aircraft had dropped 339 tons and Army and Navy land based aircraft had put 5,793 tons on the island. And this does not by any means tell all of the air effort. For commencing 8 December

[56] CTG 94.9 Action Report of Bombardment of Iwo Jima for 24 and 27 December, 9 Jan. 1945, Encl. (C), para. 7.

[57] (a) COMFWDAREA CENPAC, Preliminary Report, Ser 00305 of 3 Feb. 1945, p. 1, (b) COMDESRON Four Action Report for 5 January, 9 Jan. 1944, p. 11; (c) CTG 94.9 Action Report for 24 January, 26 Jan. 1945, p. 1.

1944, there were one or more air attacks on the Bonin-Volcano Islands each day until 19 February, a period of 74 consecutive days.[58]

Despite this large scale air bombardment effort:

> Photographic coverage of Iwo Jima to 24 January 1945, indicate that damage to installations resulting from bombing strikes between 3 December, 1944, and 24 January, 1945, was, on the whole, negligible. . . .[59]

An ever increasing number of Japanese defensive gun positions continued to be disclosed by the almost continuous photographic missions that were being flown. And many, many more well camouflaged gun positions and fortified caves and tunnels were not known to exist until the enemy's hand was forced just prior to, or subsequent to, the actual landing.

MOVEMENT TO THE OBJECTIVE

Some nine hundred ships and craft were assigned to DETACHMENT. Because of operational requirements, part of which were due to supporting General MacArthur's Philippine operations, some of these had to be initially assembled at Eniwetok, Ulithi or the Marianas. Their coordinated movement to and closely timed arrival at the very cramped Iwo Jima beach area was a major task, calling for navigation, seamanship and seagoing judgment of a very high order.

The movement of the Expeditionary Force towards Iwo Jima commenced when the Tractor Group of LSTs departed Pearl Harbor on 22 January, almost a month before the assault landing.

The Transport Groups departed on 28 January. Movement of the ships and aircraft from the Hawaiian Islands was via Eniwetok for logistics support for the smaller craft, and then via Saipan—Tinian for the final rehearsal. No Japanese contacts were logged by the main body until in the vicinity of Iwo Jima, when, on 15, 16, and 17 February, possible submarine contacts were made.

Japanese sources available since World War II have revealed that Japanese submarines observed the movements of the large number of our ships in and out of Ulithi, and in and out of the Marianas in early to mid-February 1945. Japanese naval patrol planes reported on 13 February, 170 ships moving north from Saipan. The question in the minds of the Japanese high command

[58] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Monthly Operations Report, Feb. 1945, p. 59.

[59] CTG 56 Iwo Jima Report, 1 Apr. 1945, Encl. (C), G-2 Report, p. 4.

seems to have been whether our objective was Iwo Jima or Okinawa. In his diary a Japanese soldier on Iwo Jima pinpointed the attacks on Iwo Jima as four days after leaving Saipan and identified the attackers as the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Marine Divisions. Japanese reconnaissance aircraft confirmed the objective as Iwo Jima when they sighted the amphibians of the Gunfire and Covering Group on the 16th, 17th, and 18th.[60]

SURPRISE

There was no surprise, either tactical or strategical, at Iwo Jima.

The senior Japanese prisoner captured on Iwo reported that all troops had been moved into their defensive position on 14 February upon detection of Task Force 58 initiating its raids on Tokyo.

Strategically, the Japanese knew that we needed an island close enough to Japan to provide fighter protection for the B-29s, and that that island had to have adequate level terrain for two or three long airstrips. If that island had suitable beaches to accommodate a large amphibious assault, it was a likely objective. Iwo Jima filled this prescription closely. No other island in the southern part of the Nampo Shoto chain of islands quite did.

Tactically, the Japanese submarines and air patrols provided the direction of our thrust, north along the Marianas chain.

So the enemy knew it had to be Iwo Jima.

AT THE OBJECTIVE—PRE-LANDING AIR BOMBARDMENT

A very generous amount of air bombardment by planes of both Services took place throughout the months prior to the landing and in the immediate pre-landing period. The great majority of the weight of bombs dropped prior to 16 February 1945, was high-level area bombardment by B-24s and B-29s flying out of the Marianas.

Once the Japanese had started moving their gun and mortar installations into concrete-lined caves, narrow ravines, tortured gullies and cement-covered emplacements, the actual damage to guns and mortars was very limited.

Extracts from the report on support aircraft operations commencing with

[60] (a) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 2–46, 15 Feb. 1946, Item 5; (b) CTF 56, Iwo Jima Report, Encl. (C), p. 9; (c) COMPHIBSPAC (CTF 51) Iwo Jima Report, 19 May 1945, Part V, Section (C).

Dog Day minus three indicates the problems for Army high-level bombers and naval dive bombers and fighter aircraft:

Dog —3 Day

Sorties for the day totalled 158, but due to weather only 6 support missions were executed. . . .

The afternoon Army Air Force heavy bomber strike arrived on station slightly ahead of schedule. The ceiling was too low for bombing, but as the weather was expected to improve, the Army bombers were kept on station for one hour, the maximum their fuel would allow. The weather did not improve and the strike was returned to base.

Dog —2 Day

Light antiaircraft was intense throughout the day. Heavy antiaircraft was intense only during the strike on the southern part of the island by 42 Army Liberators. . . . The majority of bombs dropped from 5000 feet hit in the target area. . . . Photographs showed no known installations hit by these bombs, but the fragments may have caused some damage and casualties.

Dog —1 Day

Weather was only partially good for flying. . . . Most strikes were made through breaks in cloud formations. By 1330 when the Army land-based bombing group arrived, a layer of low clouds with ceiling at 2000 feet held up the strike. The strike eventually was cancelled and the formation was returned to base.

* * * * *

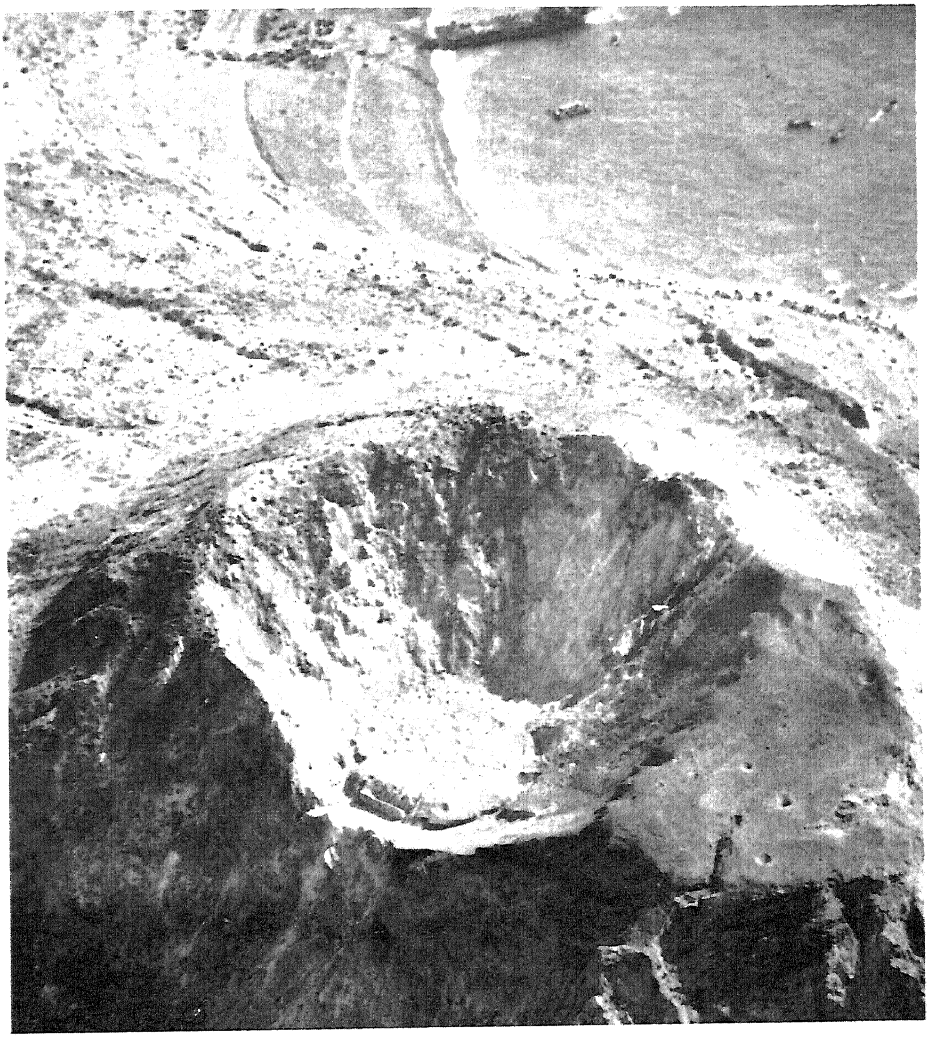
Results for the day are difficult to assess. It is, however, believed that support aircraft functioned better than on the two preceding days. . . . Concentration attacks on targets, relatively few in number, but studded with numerous installations, conceivably weakened the areas commanding the landing beaches.[61]

The effect of heavy bombardment aircraft over a lengthy period of time does not appear to have caused appreciable destruction of specific installations. It did not disrupt communications nor reduce morale of the enemy.

AT THE OBJECTIVE—DOG MINUS THREE

The scheduled pre-landing gun bombardment started off on the wrong foot—due to rain squalls and poor visibility at the objective on Dog minus three. Since our ships were under orders to fire only when the air observers could see their objective and spot the gunfire, and to remain outside the 100

[61] CTF 52 Iwo Jima Report, 22 Feb. 1945, Encl. (D), pp. D-2, -3, -4.



80-G-307201

Mount Suribachi with landing beach in background.

fathom line until the minesweepers had completed their sweeping, ranges were from 8,000 to 10,000 yards. When the spotting planes were clear of clouds, Japanese anti-aircraft fire kept them sensibly wary of flying low enough to easily identify targets for the ships' guns. Despite this handicap, and as a Japanese soldier on Iwo Jima wrote in his diary on Dog minus three:

> Even though by dispensation of heaven, the characteristic mist of this Island caused the sky to be overcast, aerial bombing and naval gunfire destroyed our airfield and grounded our planes.[62]

[62] CTF 56 Iwo Jima Report, Encl. (C), G-2 Report.

The view points of the first day's results by the gunfire (CTF 54) and support (CTF 52) commanders were somber:

> a. Targets were well concealed and extremely difficult to locate. In spite of heavy bombardment of the objective, little damage was apparent.
>
> b. Only about half the bombardment contemplated on this day was accomplished.[63]

DOG MINUS TWO

The weather cleared on Dog minus two and was suitable for air operations throughout the day. The minesweepers had located only one shaggy mine in eight feet of water and destroyed it.

For the second day, the gunfire bombardment ships were ordered to carry out their pinpoint destruction of targets while in the 3,000 to 6,000 yard gun range and to provide close support for the underwater demolition teams which were to begin their efforts at 1100.

As the heavy ships worked their way inshore during the morning, the Japanese were gradually enticed to open up from a few well-concealed batteries and heavy mortars. The cruiser *Pensacola* (CA-24) was hit hard and the *Tennessee* (BB-43) lightly so. The Executive Officer of the *Pensacola* was killed and her CIC wrecked.

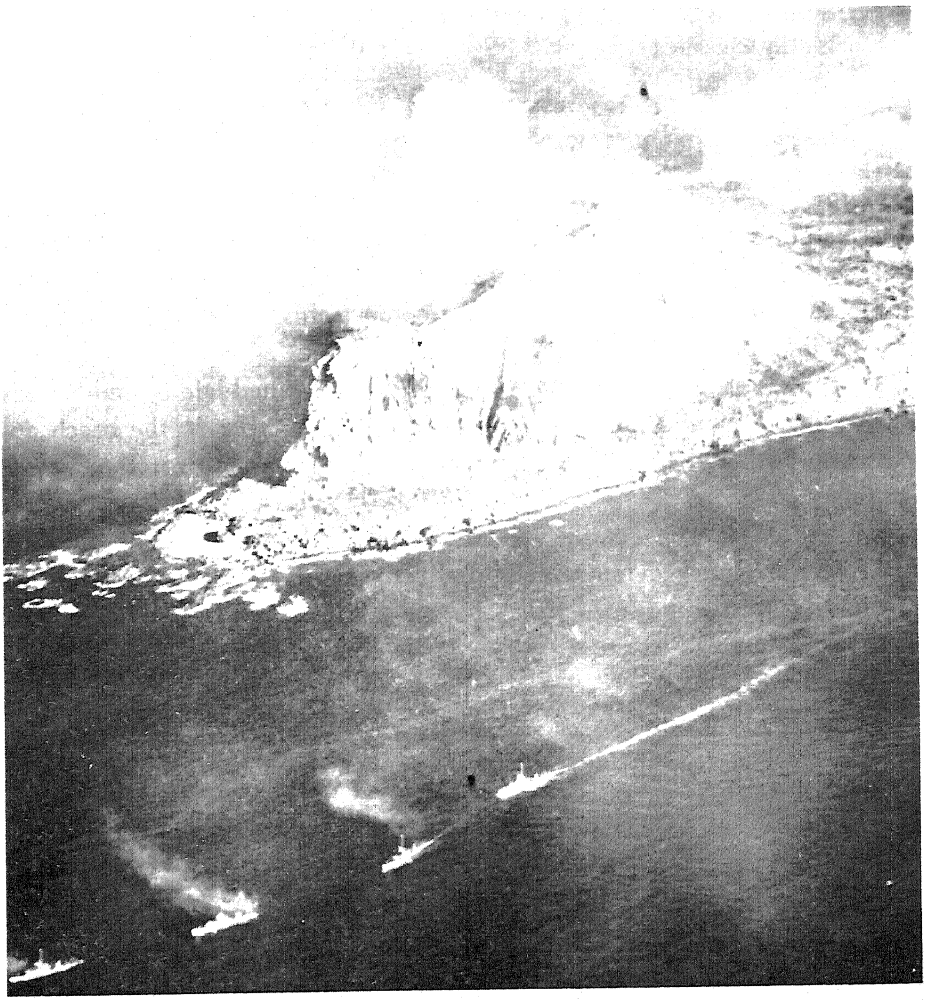
When at 1100 the LCI gunboats moved in to provide close support for the personnel of the Underwater Demolition Teams, three previously unlocated guns in a four-gun Japanese battery overlooking the beach from Mount Suribachi, as well as a considerable number of untouched mortars on the high ground on the north flank of the beaches, came to life just after the gunboats let go their rockets. In the furious engagement that ensued eleven of the twelve of the LCIs were hit and one was sunk. The LCIs gallantly carried out their mission despite 170 casualties, and a relief craft took over the task of the LCI sunk. The close, close-in battleship *Nevada* (OBB-36) opened up with all her batteries on the multiplicity of targets. The Japanese batteries and mortars eventually checked or ceased their fire or were destroyed.

Rear Admiral Blandy signaled the gunboats:

> Greatly admire magnificent courage your valiant personnel. . . .[64]

The gunboat commander reported back:

[63] (a) CTF 54, Iwo Jima Report, p. 9; (b) CTF 52, Iwo Jima Report, Encl. (C), para 2.
[64] CTF 52 to CTU 52.5.1, 171710 Feb. 1945.



80-G-307186

Smoke rising from aerial and naval bombardment of Mount Suribachi.

> LCI-474 sunk: LCIs 441 and 473 require towing: LCIs 438, 449, 457, 466 and 471 require extensive repairs to hull and armament; 450 and 469 can be operated after above water damage is repaired; 346, 348 and 627 operative.[65]

The LCI-348 was the only LCI of the initial twelve used for gunfire support which was not hit.

The gun bombardment continued with renewed vigor throughout the afternoon, so that:

[65] CTU 52.5.1 to CTF 52, 181352 Feb. 1945.

The ammunition expenditures for this day, however, approximated those originally scheduled.[66]

THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF PRELIMINARIES

During these first two days prior to the assault landing, the water off Iwo Jima had been swept for mines, the beaches had been examined for underwater defenses by the Underwater Demolition Teams, and the island defenses had been peered at through hundreds of gun sights, spyglasses, binoculars and photographic lenses.

Two pieces of early news were good. The Japanese had laid no mine fields around Iwo Jima and there were no underwater obstacles in the beach approaches. Surf and beach conditions were judged suitable for the assault landing.

But, and it was a big *but,* the volume of enemy fire which the LCI gunboats had received while providing protection to the personnel of the Underwater Demolition Teams indicated that Japanese gun defenses of the beach area were still strong and effective.

The official *but* read:

> At the end of the D-2 bombardment it was apparent from reports of firing and from photographs that relatively little destruction had been accomplished.[67]

DOG MINUS ONE

Accordingly, the next day Dog minus one, there was a massive concentration of our short-range heavy gun bombardment on Japanese gun positions, pillboxes, and blockhouses near the beaches, while the amount of destructive work on the Japanese positions on the Motoyama Plateau was lightened. This fire from the old battleships on the beach area was at ranges of 1,800 to 3,000 yards. By nightfall, it was believed that the old battleships had finally done the necessary in the beach area. Rear Admiral Blandy reported:

> Ammunition allowances were authorized to the extent of all bombardment ammunition on board, less the quantity scheduled for D-Day fires and, in reserve, prescribed for one battleship.[68]

[66] CTF 52 Iwo Jima Report, 22 Feb. 1945, Encl. (C), p. 2.
[67] *Ibid.,* Encl. (C), p. 3.
[68] *Ibid.*

> At 1330 CTF 52 asked CTF 54 whether, in his opinion, targets on the island had been destroyed sufficiently to permit the landing to proceed on schedule. Rear Admiral Rodgers (CTF 54) replied that . . . the landing could be made without excessive losses . . . and recommended that the landing take place as planned.[69]

Upon receipt of this report, Rear Admiral Blandy sent his message to Vice Admiral Turner which read as follows:

> Though weather has not permitted complete expenditure of entire ammunition allowance and more installations can be found and destroyed, I believe landing can be accomplished tomorrow as scheduled, if necessary.
>
> I recommend, however, special attention before and during landing to flanks and East Coast of island with neutralizing fire and white phosphorus projectiles immediately available, if required. Amplifying report follows immediately.[70]

Vice Admiral Turner, churning north in the *Eldorado* through a relatively calm sea and being advised that the weather on 20 February would not be so good as that on 19 February, made the final decision to land as scheduled on the nineteenth.

Before describing the landing, it should be recorded that the gunfire support ships fired 30 percent more ammunition at Iwo Jima than at Saipan. The actual tonnage was 14,250 at Iwo Jima versus 10,965 at Saipan. Since Iwo Jima covered only seven and a half square miles while Saipan occupied 70 square miles, the greatly increased weight of naval gunfire used against Iwo Jima is readily apparent.[71]

In his Action Report on Iwo Jima, Vice Admiral Turner stated frankly:

> An attempt was made to destroy all enemy guns that would impede the landing, but the large number of enemy installations and the enemy's skill in concealing his guns prevented this being accomplished.[72]

THE ASSAULT LANDINGS—DOG DAY

The beginning of morning twilight on 19 February 1945, was at 0549 with sunrise at 0707, and the sun set at 1831 with dark arriving at 1948.

[69] CTF 54 Iwo Jima Report, 10 Mar. 1945, p. 12.

[70] CTF 52 to CTF 51, 18 Feb. 1945. NCR 60303.

[71] CINCPAC-CINCPOA letter, A16/3/FF12, Ser 003975 of 27 Aug. 1945, paras. 96 and 97.

[72] COMPHIBSPAC Iwo Jima Report, 19 May 1945, Part II, Section (C), General Account, para. 5, pp. 10–11.



80-G-307205

Landing ships and craft at East Beach near Mount Suribachi.

BOAT CONTROL

A modification of naval responsibility for putting the Marines on the beach when and where they wished to be landed was introduced for the assault phase of the Iwo Jima assault landings. The instructions read:

> Naval Control responsibility extends seaward from the high water line, except during landing of assault waves, when it ends at the point at which

wave guide boats leave their respective waves, which will be at a point approximately 300 yards from the beach.[73]

The Transport Area was about 15,000 yards off the southeastern beaches. The Line of Departure was 4,000 yards from the beach line. The LSM and LST areas were between the Line of Departure and the Transport Area at about 5,500 yards and 8,000 yards, respectively. The weather on 19 February was clear, with a ten-knot trade wind. How Hour was at 0900.

The Landing Plan called for putting 9,000 men ashore in the first 45 minutes. The flag signal to "Land the Landing Force" was executed at 0645. At 0805 naval gunfire was lifted and 120 aircraft shot rockets and machine guns and dropped bombs on the beach area and its flanks. Napalm was used generously.

At 0825 the early landing waves were in position, and at 0830 the first wave was directed to proceed to the beach. The Pre-Landing Gunfire Support Plan called for putting 8,000 shells on the beach while the troops were moving in from the Line of Departure. Fire was directed at the beach until 0857, when it shifted to the flanks and immediate rear.

The first assault wave hit the beach along the 3,000-yard front at almost exactly H-Hour, 0900, and moved ahead rapidly for the first 350 yards under the very real assistance of a rolling barrage of naval gunfire. The second wave was the initial troop wave.

As the Marine Commander reported:

No anti-boat gunfire was reported by the initial waves.[74]

The Japanese gun, mortar, and small arms fire against the later waves of amtracs, and against the troops which landed from them was definitely light on the southern beaches until about H plus 30 minutes, by which time many lead vehicles were well off the beach.

Japanese gunfire picked up more quickly against the later waves headed for the northern beaches and by 0920 reports of heavy Japanese mortar fire against the right flank beaches were received.

Progress straight across the southern belt of the island was rapid and by 1030 Marines had reached the cliffs overlooking the western beaches of Iwo Jima and by 1130 these cliffs were in the possession of the Fifth Marine Division. Progress on the right flank was slower, much slower, as the Marines

[73] COMPHIBSPAC Op Plan A25–44, 27 Dec. 1944, Annex G, Encl. (A), General Instructions for Ship to Shore Movement, para. 4.

[74] CTF 56 Iwo Jima Report, Encl. (B), G-3 Report, p. 3.

met gradually intensifying fire from the quarry and plateau area, from undestroyed pillboxes, and encountered land mines.

The tanks were called for, and by noon some reserve units were called in. Since these were embarked in LCVPs and LCMs real problems at the beach line soon developed.

The amtracs had had their difficulties with the steep beach and the steep slopes of volcanic sand, but by and large they made it. When it came to the landing craft, the LCVP and the LCM, the amphibians ran into trouble because of the combination of steep beach gradients and the onshore swells. The craft grounded fair and square but the swells broached, then swamped many, before they could be completely unloaded.

By nightfall, all assault elements of both divisions had been landed, plus other supporting elements to bring to 30,000 the total of troops landed in one day.

As the Regimental Commander of Combat Team 28 reported:

> Preparation fires against beach defense were as good as could be expected. Naval gunfire in conjunction with air support neutralized the beach and area inland sufficiently to allow the assault waves to clear the beach and advance rapidly inland.[75]

Or as the Commanding General, Fifth Marine Division stated in regard to Dog Day.

> Weather and surf conditions were good and the immediate effect of air and naval gunfire preparations were excellent.
>
> * * * * *
>
> First troops ashore reported occasional enemy small arms fire from the base of Mount Suribachi, mortar fire from a defiladed area in that same vicinity and from the north . . . nearly every pillbox on the beach and ground in rear of the beach had been destroyed.[76]

THE SWELL

As related above, the swell, coupled with an inshore current parallel to the beach, turned into a major hazard. The following reports bear this out:

[75] COMGENFIFTHMARDIV Iwo Jima Report, Vol. V, 25 Apr. 1945, Annex George, (RCT 28 Action Report), para. 3a.

[76] (a) COMGENFIFTHMARDIV Iwo Jima Report, Vol. I, 28 Apr. 1945, p. 17; (b) *Ibid.*, Annex How (Naval Gunfire Support), p. 4.

> Due to steepness of the beach, waves broke close to shore, exerting their full force on and swamping the stern and broaching LCVPs and even LCMs.
>
> * * * * *
>
> With each wave, boats would be picked up bodily and thrown broadside onto the beach, where succeeding waves swamped and wrecked them and dug them deeply into the sand, beyond hope of salvage in most cases. Losses had to be accepted until the beachhead was secured, and LSTs, LSMs, and LCTs could be employed. The resultant accumulation of wreckage piled higher and higher, and extended seaward to form underwater obstacles which damaged propellers, and even bilged a few of the landing ships.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Amphibious trailers pulled by LVTs bogged down and could not be dragged up even when assisted by caterpillars.[77]

The swell, the inshore current, and undertow were the initial hazards for the naval amphibians in the assault phase. But the beaches themselves, and the poor holding ground off the beaches were added problems during the landing of the logistic support.

THE VOLCANIC SAND

The depth of the beach at the water's edge varied along its length from five to ninety feet. The beach area was backed by a soft cinder terrace varying from eight to fourteen feet in height sloping at an angle of about 45°.[78]

Admiral Nimitz's staff described the situation:

> The coarse volcanic sand . . . had no cohesive consistency. Its steep gradients permitted landing craft to beach with practically a 'dry ramp,' but this advantage was more than nullified by the sand itself. Troops debouching from the landing craft struggled up the slopes ankle deep in it. Wheeled vehicles bogged to their frames. A few tanks stalled in the surf and were swamped. . . . The first terrace had a 40% slope which proved insurmountable for some amphibious tractors. As vehicles left the ramps they immediately sank down, and their spinning treads then banked the sand back under the ramps causing the latter to lift gradually, thus making it harder for each succeeding vehicle. . . .[79]

Early in the landing it was decided that Green One was the best beach from both the hydrographic and topographic point of view.

[77] (a) CTG 53.2 (COMTRANSRON 15) Action Report, 13 Apr. 1945, Encl. (C), Beachmaster Report, p. 2; (b) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Monthly Operations Report, February 1945, Annex A, pp. 47–48; (c) COMPHIBSPAC Iwo Jima Report, Part II.

[78] COMTRANSRON 16, Iwo Jima Report, 15 Apr. 1945, p. 17.

[79] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Monthly Operations Report, February 1945, p. 48.



80–G–317877

Congestion of supplies on beaches due to lack of exits.



80–G–317849

LST–764 unloads at Iwo Jima. Note disabled vehicles.

In regard to the volcanic sand on Iwo Jima, it was very fortunate that extensive measures had been taken by the amphibians to overcome this hazard prior to the landing. Admiral Hill remembers that:

> My staff was concerned from the start of planning over the soft volcanic sand rising in terraces behind the shallow beaches.[80]

A sand sled able to carry and lay quickly 150 feet of marston matting was developed, and enough small tractors, sleds and matting were obtained to lay eight miles of temporary outlet roads on the Iwo Jima beaches. These were the life savers.

THE WEATHER DETERIORATES

On Dog plus one, a much stronger wind (14 to 20 knots) blew from the west during the morning, relieving the east coast beaches of Iwo. But by late afternoon the wind had shifted to easterly again and immediately built up the swell making the beaches unsuitable for landing craft smaller than LCMs. One transport squadron commander reported:

> Bad weather, with rain, northeast winds, steep seas and heavy surf made LCVP and LCM traffic untenable on the beaches.[81]

By Dog plus three, George Washington's Birthday, the weather was definitely subnormal, with a northerly to easterly wind of 16–25 knots and occasional stronger gusts. Rain pelted down and unloading enough hot cargo to keep the Marines happy became a real problem, as this comment indicates:

> The surf had a lateral action which was strong enough to cause lateral motion along the beach of not only barges but loaded LCTs and LCMs. I saw LCMs travel laterally as much as 75 feet in 10 minutes, despite bow lines to two tractors on the beach, and their own engines full ahead.[82]

The problem of the beach, crowded with wrecked and broached small craft, with their gear washing around in the beach surf is described as follows:

> One of this ship's LCMs, which after a run to the beach, was hoisted aboard, with a rubber life raft packed into one screw and another which had all three blades of one screw broken off and the shaft broken, had the remains

[80] Hill Memo of 17 Nov. 1966.
[81] CTG 53.2 (TRANSRON 15) Action Report, 13 Apr. 1945.
[82] CTG 53.7 Action Report for 19–26 Feb. 1945, no date, p. 11.

> of a hammock, a life preserver, and two fathoms of 3-inch line in the remaining screw.[83]

Several ships called attention to the fact that the island, green on D-Day, became a bare and blackened mass of sand and rock due to the gun bombardment. And a repair ship movingly remarked:

> At times we had three damaged craft alongside simultaneously. Because of tremendous swells, which often reached heights of fifteen feet, the *Agenor* (ARL-3) and vessels under repair suffered considerable damage from one another as the seas caused the ships to crash together.[84]

After several days of frustration, including a good try at using pontoon causeways, the beaches were closed to all LCMs and LCVPs. LCTs, LSMs, and LSTs were given the exclusive chore of unloading. Even these larger craft, due to the strong winds and heavy swells, were not always successful in preventing broaching. Their primary difficulty was that their stern anchors would not hold in the volcanic ash off the beaches.

Barges also proved weak reeds to lean on. The combination of two area air alerts occurring soon after the LSTs were ordered to launch their barges, and the consequent towing alongside in rough water of the recently launched pontoon barges, resulted in drowning out their motors and radio equipment. Nine of the 22 barges suffered casualties to propulsion units in launching.

As the commander of the unit reported:

> This day [Dog Day plus three] proceeded and ended as it had begun, with barges reported as missing, barges reported on the beach, barges reported holed, and sinking barges in the tow of salvage tugs.[85]

The Beachmasters had a rough time the first day, when the surf was mild, since.

> Enemy opposition was strong with small arms, mortars and artillery fire inflicting a high percentage of casualties to personnel and equipment.[86]

The next four days and nights the surf was bad as was the intermittent artillery and mortar fire. This Japanese fire took a fairly heavy toll of the very limited trained beach party personnel and gave their untrained replacements plenty to worry about.

Transport Squadron 16, which landed the Fifth Marine Division, reported

[83] *USS President Jackson* (APA-18), Action Report, 17 Mar. 1945, p. 7.
[84] *USS Agenor* Action Report, 1 Apr. 1945, p. 1.
[85] CTG 53.7 Action Report, p. 6.
[86] CTG 53.2 Action Report, Encl. (C), p. 1.

losing 121 landing craft out of 506 carried, despite the limited beaching use of these craft.

Many DUKWs were overloaded for the rough condition of the waters around Iwo Jima and sank. Because of this, 61 were lost by just one Truck Battalion.[87]

UNLOADING PROBLEMS

Very few of the smaller amphibious craft had time or took time to write a report about their problems at Iwo Jima. They were lucky to find time to eat.

An exception was the new LST-807, which reached Pearl Harbor in time for the rehearsal. She did the Iwo Jima operation under the command of Lieutenant George D. Straight, U. S. Navy, and as part of T.U. 53.3.9, LST Unit Six.

[87] (a) CTG 53.2 Action Report, p. 13; (b) Headquarters 43rd Amphibian Truck Battalion, Action Report, paras. 4 and 5.



80–G–317875

Road construction at Iwo.

The LST-807 entered in her Action Report, the combat and logistic support she carried to Iwo Jima:

> Ship combat loaded with two 2 x 30 causeways, side carried, and 492 tons of 105 and 155 mm artillery ammunition stowed beneath 21 DUKWs on the tank deck. Main deck cargo consisted of 5 amphibious trailers, 1 gasoline tank truck, 1 two and half ton repair truck, 2 Jeeps, barbed wire, water cans, 400 white phosphorous shells, boxes of hand grenades and miscellaneous DUKW maintenance gear. Passenger troops . . . totalled 14 officers and 358 men.

A MODERN MIRACLE

The LST-807 had beaching problems, as did nearly all other landing craft at Iwo Jima.

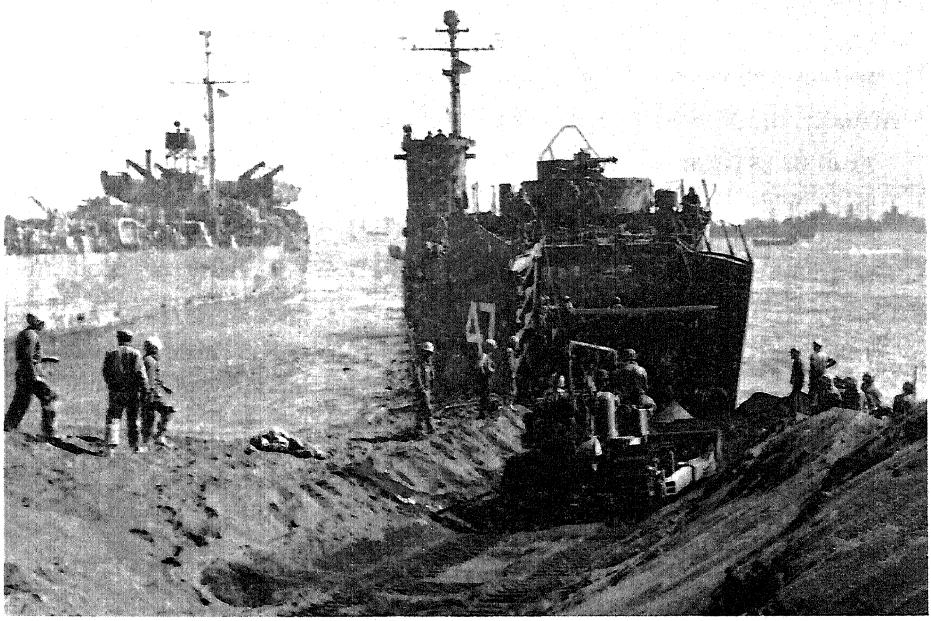
> . . . Spotted FUTATSU Rocks by light of star shells which made landing somewhat easier. 2248: Let go stern anchor, hit beach at ⅔ speed and piled up on top of wrecked vehicles, of which the beach was covered. After hitting the beach, we could just make out a pin point of light which was the beach marker. It is partially hidden by vehicles and is not visible 100 yards in the rain. . . . We beached about 50 feet to left of marker. There was no one visible on beach and it appeared deserted. About 150 yards on our right, LSM-120 was beached. Beachmaster came aboard and informed us we would have to move over towards the LSM-120 or he couldn't unload us. We were told there was a clear spot there. . . . At about this time, a member of our boat crew which was laying to alongside jumped into the water and rescued two men from a foundering DUKW. Another DUKW attempting to leave the beach through the surf and carrying three stretcher cases capsized. . . . They were rescued by the Beachmaster himself and some of his party. When the Beachmaster came aboard again, I told him I did not think it was possible to place the ship in a 50-foot space with this wind, tide and visibility. At this time, 2300, LST-390 beached 100 yards on our right between this ship and the LSM-120, piling up on more wrecked vehicles as we had done. After seeing nothing could be gained by remaining where we were, I decided to retrack and try another beaching in the 50-foot clear space which was now between the LST-390 and the LSM-120.
>
> 22 February 1945
>
> 0010: Retracted from beach. After a difficult time maneuvering against wind and tide, we beached again at 0051 about 125 yards from our first beach and in between LST-390 and LSM-120. We hit the 50-foot clear space about 10 feet off center, piling up our port bow door and corner of the ramp on top of more wrecked vehicles. The Beachmaster came aboard and told us he could find no men or material to remove the wrecked vehicles from in

front of our ramp, and that we would have to retract and beach again 10 feet to our right and close up against LSM-120. If this could have been accomplished, it would be considered by this command a modern miracle. Beachmaster was told that we would send a message to anyone he suggested explaining the situation. He then agreed to try moving the wrecked vehicles. While the work was progressing, the LSM-120 on our right retracked from the beach at 0210. We then decided to move over to the spot vacated by her. . . .

TIT FOR TAT

0213. Retracted and while doing so, the wind blew us up against the LSTs starboard quarter, our bow door cutting a slit in her side about 5 feet long just below the deck level. 0231. Beached again in spot vacated by the LSM-120. . . . The Beachmaster was now satisfied and after he had moved two more wrecked vehicles . . . unloading commenced at 0304. . . . 0525. LST-390 retracked and beached again close to our starboard side. It beached very lightly and could not hold on, so it blew up against our side and we both started to broach. As she retracked, she unavoidably raked our starboard side putting an 18-inch gash through compartment C-205. . . .[88]

[88] LST-807 Action Report, 11 Mar. 1945, pp. 1, 3–4.



80-G-317876

Bulldozers reduce the terraces to give access to the lateral roads.

THE SEAMAN'S EYE

The absence of that expertise, the seaman's eye, so much depreciated by the landsmen who have the final authority in the Washington defense establishment, caused damage to far more ships in TF 51 than did the Japanese.

The dense concentration of the assault shipping in the comparatively limited sea room off the 3,500 yards of landing beaches required seaman's skill of the highest order during this bad weather period. This skill was not always available, as Vice Admiral Turner noted:

> Collisions occurred between landing craft and landing ships, between landing ships and gunboats, between fire support ships and transports, and between ships of the same types. . . .[89]

Some ships, such as LST-928, were involved in many more than just one collision. The hapless LST-928 established something of a record for a single operation. At Iwo, she traded collisions with the LST-713 (twice), LCT-1269, *Fayette* (APA-43), *Starr* (AKA-67), *Whiteside* (AKA-90), *China Victory* (XAK), and the LST-764.

The LST-928 even mistakenly reported a collision with *Barnstable* (APA-93), though that ship luckily was anchored in far away Leyte Gulf:

> While maneuvering into position we drifted into APA-93 and scraped our portside on her starboard bow.

Actually, the *Yancey* (AKA-93) was the victim:

> At 0130 LST-928, while maneuvering in the area, rammed this ship head on at frame 41, starboard side, bending in hull plating and carrying away one life raft and life raft support.[90]

The rough waters in the Transport Area caused plenty of problems. According to *Agenor's* (ARL-3) report:

> A high percentage of damage to ships, other than due to enemy fire, was caused by an extreme excess of litter on the beaches and in the water which fouled and damaged screws, rudders, skegs and anchors. Debris, consisting of empty shell cases, lines, fenders, cable, cargo nets, barbed wire, tents, and wrecked and partially submerged tanks, DUKWs, Amtracs, LSMs, LCVP hulls, etc., caused underwater damage to hulls and fouled screws, rudders and anchors of ships making landings.[91]

* * * * *

[89] COMPHIBSPAC Iwo Jima Report, Part II, para. 16, p. 13.
[90] (a) LST-928 Action Report, 23 Mar. 1945, p. 4; (b) *Yancey* War Diary, 28 Feb. 1945.
[91] *USS Agenor* Action Report, 1 Apr. 1945, p. 2.

> The ship took its worst beating in the first few days of operation, until it learned to refuse to go alongside a transport which did not have her lines ready and did not have fenders out. If this ship held back long enough, the transports always managed eventually to provide line and fenders, which at first they said they did not have.[92]

Before leaving Pearl Harbor, Vice Admiral Turner, in a memorandum to Rear Admiral Hill, wrote:

> I am very concerned over the recent increase in the number of collisions, near collisions, and bad navigation. This reveals not only a lack of training, but a lack of initiative on the part of the unit commanders and captains.[93]

Thirty-six ships or large landing craft in the Iwo Jima area were involved in collisions or received major damage while alongside another ship during the period 16 February 1945 to 6 March 1945. Another 11 suffered sea damage due to heavy weather.

JAPANESE SUICIDE AIR ATTACK—IWO JIMA

By February 1945, Japanese suicide air attacks in amphibious assault areas were not by any means new. Fortunately at Iwo Jima kamikaze planes were thrown against the Central Pacific amphibians in only one large coordinated attack.

This surprise attack of perhaps fifty aircraft, including a fitting share of suicide planes, occurred from 1640 to dusk on 21 February 1945, at a time when the sky was overcast and the ceiling low.

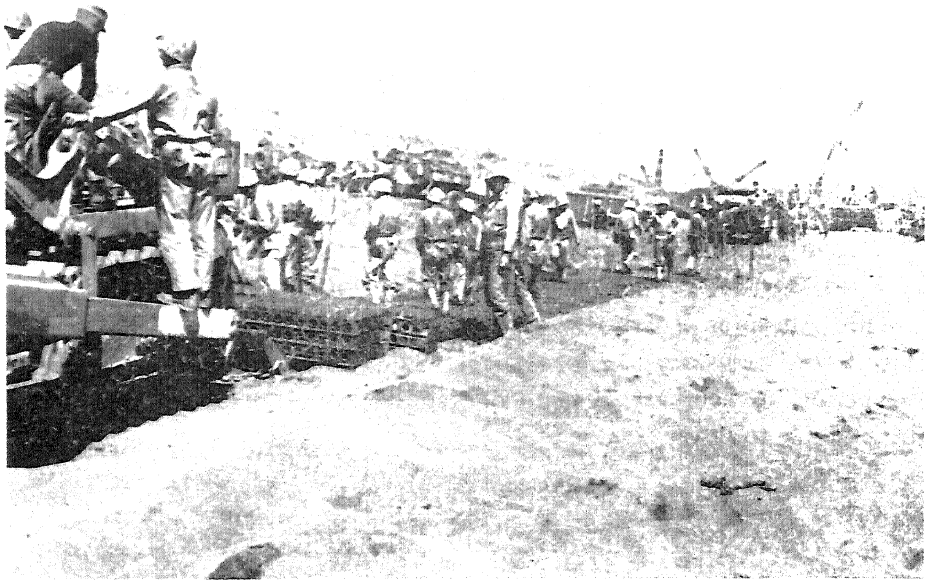
In the ships regularly attached to the Joint Expeditionary Force two jeep carriers, the *Lunga Point* (CVE-94) and the *Bismarck Sea* (CVE-95), as well as the net tender *Keokuk* (AKN-4) and the LST-477, were hit by suicide planes. Of these, the *Bismarck Sea* was sunk by two suicide planes. Loss of life was heavy. The LST-477 fortunately was not carrying a deck load of gasoline, as were most of the LSTs in the formation, so she escaped with the loss of nine men killed and five wounded.

The big *Saratoga* (CV-3) temporarily assigned from Task Group 58.5 to work with the jeep carriers to furnish night fighter patrols in the assault areas, was hit by four or five suicide planes, severely damaged, and forced to retire to the Navy yard.

Other than this foretaste of what was to come at Okinawa, Japanese air

[92] LSM-47 Action Report, 9 Mar. 1945, Encl. (F), p. 42.

[93] RKT to HWH, memorandum, 16 Jan. 1945.



80–G–317879

Preassembled Marston matting is laid.



80–G–317838

Unloading at Red Beach.

efforts against the amphibians at Iwo Jima were generally light and of considerable nuisance value only. The *Blessman* (DE-69) and *Gamble* (DM-15) were hit by night bombers on 18 February, and the *Bennett* (DD-473) the evening of 1 March 1945. High-level bombing attacks were made which caused delays due to ship's company going to general quarters and milling about, but made no hits.[94]

A SIGN OF LATER VICTORY TO COME

All the amphibians, whether on land or sea, and everyone else within sight of Mount Suribachi, received a tremendous lift when the spirited Marines of the 28th Regiment of the Fifth Marine Division raised the American flag on the summit of Mount Suribachi about 1035 on 23 February 1945.

Despite this favorable turn (which facilitated the full force of the Fifth Corps being used against the defensive positions to the north), the Japanese "fight unto death" tactics were aided by the rugged volcanic crags, steep defiles, and severe escarpments. The Marine advance was slow, but inexorable.

It was on this day that the Japanese Domei News despatch stated that Admirals Turner and Spruance

> have led their men to a point where they are indeed close to our mainland, but they find themselves in a dilemma as they are unable to either advance or recede. This man Turner shall not return home alive. He must not and he won't. This is one of the many things we can do to rest at ease the many souls of those who have paid the supreme sacrifice.[95]

On 9 March 1945, Vice Admiral Turner turned over TF 51 to his Second-in-Command, Rear Admiral Hill, and departed for Guam.

This departure, before final victory, was necessary in order to permit concentration on last-minute preparations for the Okinawa operation, for which rehearsals were being held and for which ships would start departing from bases in a few days. Preliminary bombardment at Okinawa was to commence on 20 March 1945, and Kerama Retto, an off-lying island group from Okinawa providing a good anchorage, was to be occupied on 25 March 1945.

At 1800 on 16 March, Iwo Jima was declared secure. By that date 36

[94] (a) LST Flotilla 13 Action Report, 22 Mar. 1945, para. III (7); (b) *Saratoga* Action Report, 9 Mar. 1945.

[95] Domei News Despatch of 23 February 1945, as quoted in *Iwo Jima's Press*, Vol. III, No. L.



80-G-26-G-4140

View from the top of Mount Suribachi.

B-29s had utilized Iwo Jima for emergency landings on their way back to the Marianas from bombing the Empire. However, the last Japanese "Banzai" charge against the occupying troops did not occur until 26 March 1945, after the mopping up operations started, and by 11 June 1945, 867 additional Japanese were captured and 1,602 killed by garrison forces on Iwo Jima.[96]

THE NAVY RECEIVES A FEW BOUQUETS FROM ITS OWN

Captain James G. Sampson, Commander Defense Group, had this to say in his Action Report:

> The Iwo Jima unloading phase—was performed by these LSMs, LCTs, and LSTs under trying and dangerous conditions. The anchorage area was unprotected from the sea, the beaches and their approaches were treacherous due to wreckage, yet these craft worked continuously day and night for about thirty-five days until the assignment was completed. The officers and men on the majority of these ships were taking part in their first operation. . . .[97]

One senior lieutenant, a veteran of two landing operations in the Mediterranean, and Commanding Officer, USS LST-760 at Iwo Jima, gave as his opinion:

> Generally I would say that the amphibious part of the operation was a good test of the planning, tactic, personnel and equipment, and that the operation was carried off in accordance with the best standards of American courage, resourcefulness, mechanical ability and enterprise. It was a privilege to be there.[98]

Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill, when this bitter struggle was over, wrote:

> It is with great pride that I pay tribute, not only to the Fifth Amphibious Corps for its heroic assault and capture of Iwo Jima, but the other officers and men of this Task Force who, although many of them were engaged in their first operation, accomplished their tasks with determination, resourcefulness and disregard of personnel danger that was an inspiration to behold.[99]

THE MARINES CAME THROUGH

In the October 1944 CINCPAC Staff Study of the Iwo Jima operation, it

[96] HQ 147th Infantry Regiment, Action Report, 11 Jun. 1945, para 6e.
[97] CTU 51.5.1 Iwo Jima Report, 13 Apr. 1945, p. 9.
[98] CO LST-760, Iwo Jima Report, 14 Mar. 1945, p. 5.
[99] CTU 51.5.1 Iwo Jima Report, p. 9.

was estimated that 2,500 Marines would be killed in the action and another 9,500 wounded to the extent that they would need hospitalization.[100]

The bad, bad news was that about 4,600 Marines and 800 Navy were killed during the fighting and nearly 20,000 more were wounded, of whom 1,400 died of their wounds.

Every one of the lives lost was important to family, to the Navy and the Marine Corps, and to those in command, who landed them, led them in battle, or provided them with their daily bread, butter and bullets.

LOGISTICS

The logistic support at Iwo Jima was a difficult task.

The Marines had an insatiable need for supplies and the unusually poor weather during the first week raised doubts in the minds of the seagoing amphibians whether they could meet the actual needs.[101]

By February 1945 when Iwo Jima was being assaulted, the unloading of cargo was complicated and in the hands of the paper work artists. The reaction of the Commanding Officer of the *Fayette* was typical:

> The requirement that each net load of cargo be accompanied by a signed mimeographed form filled out in triplicate showing exactly what was in the net, was a source of constant delay and irritation. The plan was to retain one copy on board, deliver one copy to the control officer and one to the Beachmaster. The system finally broke down under its own weight.[102]

The hazards of pallet loading, the panacea of the mechanizers, were also reported on:

> The pallets that were loaded into LCMs were handled on the beach quickly and efficiently. However, only a small part of the bulk cargo was unloaded into LCMs. Most of it was loaded into an LST, an LSM, or an LCT. All the pallets loaded into these craft had to be broken and handled by cargo nets, resulting in delays and increased labor.[103]

The skipper of the cargo ship *Fremont* commented in his Action Report:

> The unloading of the ship was not in accordance with priority and was therefore very disorganized. Unforeseen weather and beach conditions contributed to the difficulties of unloading. . . .[104]

[100] CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Joint Staff Study DETACHMENT, 7 Oct. 1944. Appendix E, p. 31.
[101] COMSERVRON Six, Logistic Analysis for DETACHMENT Operation, 8 Mar. 1945.
[102] *USS Fayette* (APA-43) Action Report, 7 Mar. 1945, p. 14.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[104] *USS Fremont* (AKA-44) Action Report, 17 Mar. 1945, p. 9.

The Commander Force Reserve in his Action Report stated:

> Larger landing craft were dispatched to the beach with very small loads which slowed the unloading considerably.[105]

The Commander of the Assault Force remembers:

> The untrained and inexperienced Beach Parties from the newly commissioned transports were a great handicap.[106]

On the other hand, Commander Logistic Support Force stated:

> The successes in transferring ammunition have exceeded the most optimistic views.[107]

While the figures may differ a bit, depending on whose figures are being read, the logistic support delivered to the Fifth Fleet during the DETACHMENT campaign totaled approximately:

12,600,000 gallons fuel oil—34 fleet oilers employed.
7,000,000 gallons aviation gas.
4,410,000 gallons diesel oil.
250 new aircraft.
65 replacement pilots.

This was a mammoth job to do to the satisfaction of the Fifth Fleet.

COMMUNICATIONS

With hundreds of ships in the area and 30,000 Marines on the beaches, voice radio communications tended to be a bit frustrating. One LST skipper in bewailing this problem reported:

> We were taking orders from at least seven commands including the Marine Officer who said he had 'higher authority' than his actual rank. Often these orders were contradictory. In this regard, I can't help but relate just a bit of dialogue heard via voice radio coming from the Marine tanks in battle on shore.
>
> The voice calls here used are fictitious.
>
> Casper, this is Soapbox One—
> 'Move over the left flank'
> Casper, this is Soapbox Seven—
> 'Close in to the right'

[105] CTG 51.1 Iwo Jima Report, 25 Mar. 1945, p. 8.
[106] Hill memo of 17 Nov. 1966.
[107] Commander Logistic Support Force, Logistic Analysis, p. 12.

Casper, this is Soapbox—
'Stay where you are'
Casper was heard to remark—
'Yes, by God, that's what I'm going to do, until I find out whom I'm supposed to take orders from.'
I was in complete sympathy with Casper.

INTELLIGENCE

Our pre-assault intelligence in regard to Iwo Jima largely came from the documents captured in the Marianas, from aerial and submarine reconnaissance, and from the charts captured at Kwajalein, and:

> It was by far and away the finest coverage of any of my Pacific Operations.[108]

But as was stated in Vice Admiral Turner's Operation Plan:

> It must be emphasized that advance intelligence cannot be expected to disclose more than a fraction of existing defenses.[109]

One other factor which was not disclosed until the actual landings occurred was that:

> Interrogations of prisoners of war indicate that the Japs went underground early in December, 1944, abandoning all surface installations, except gun positions.[110]
>
> * * * * *
>
> The effectiveness of the cave system as a means of passive defense is evidenced by the extremely light casualties sustained by the Japanese during 70 days of pre-invasion bombings and naval gun fire, and also by the fact that it was finally necessary to clear and close each individual cave during the operation and the mopping up operations which followed.[111]

A LOOK BACK AT IWO

Iwo Jima was an epic in the battles of World War II.

The difficulty of the task, the efficiency with which the campaign was conducted, and the ardor, the courage, and the skill of the men who "pushed through to the successful conclusion" has drawn high praise from many.

[108] Hill memo of 17 Nov. 1966.
[109] COMPHIBSPAC Op Plan A25–44, Annex H, para. 1(h).
[110] COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS, Action Report, 20 May 1945, G-2 Report.
[111] HQ 147th Infantry Regiment, Report of Operations Against the Enemy, 11 Jun. 1945, Encl. 5, Report of Cave Installations.

But starting with a West Coast newspaper's critical comment regarding the high cost in lives for the success achieved, there has been recurring adverse comment in regard to the pre-landing gun bombardment. So, some of the facts and opinions on this subject will be related.

BOMBARDMENT—PRE-ASSAULT—IWO JIMA EVIDENCE

On the way back to Pearl Harbor from Tarawa, there had been established an early standard for the pre-landing bombardment for amphibious assaults. Written into Rear Admiral Turner's report on that operation was the following:

> The assault should be preceded by several days (not hours) deliberate bombardment, and day and night air attacks. Defenders should be given no rest, day or night, for at least a week prior to the landing.[112]

By the time Iwo Jima was put on the assault schedule, a higher standard was called for, since the CINCPAC-CINCPOA Staff Study for DETACHMENT opined:

> Because of the highly organized ground defense . . . a prolonged period of preparatory naval gunfire and aerial bombardment should be conducted in order that enemy defensive installations and communications will be thoroughly disrupted prior to the landing attack.[113]

Vice Admiral Turner's Operation Plan (final draft) issued four days earlier than Admiral Spruance's Operation Order had contained this requirement in regards to pre-landing bombardment of Iwo Jima.

> The density of defensive installations throughout the island make it mandatory that defenses be destroyed to the maximum extent prior to the landing.[114]

The final draft of Admiral Spruance's Operation Plan issued on that last day of December 1944, was singularly silent in respect to any special caution or instructions in regard to the magnitude of the defensive installations on Iwo Jima, or the special measures that would be needed to reduce them prior to the assault landings.[115]

Both of these final drafts of the Operation Plans were promulgated after there had been much prior correspondence in regards to naval gunfire re-

[112] COMFIFTHPHIBFOR GALVANIC Report, Encl. (J), p. 12.

[113] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Staff Study DETACHMENT, 7 Oct. 1945, pp. 8–9.

[114] COMPHIBSPAC Op Plan A25–44, Annex H, para 1(m).

[115] COMFIFTHFLEET Op Plan 13–44, paras. 3(b), 3(c)(4), and Annex B, paras. 2 and 3 (a).

quirements. The Commanding General, Fifth Amphibious Corps, Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC, in accordance with FTP 167, stated his requirements for naval gunfire on 24 October 1944, and the Commanding General Fleet Marine Forces, U. S. Pacific Fleet had added his comment and approval on 26 October 1944.

The basic request was for ten days of gunfire by a cruiser division and one battleship division, joined on Dog Day minus three by the Amphibious Support Force, which included, commencing that day, the Gunfire and Covering Force.[116]

Vice Admiral Turner in his reply to Major General Schmidt stated:

> Limitation on the availability of ships, difficulties of replenishment of ammunition and loss of surprise interpose serious obstacles to meeting your requirements.
>
> * * * * *
>
> The increased number of bombardment ships [two battleship divisions versus one] [three destroyer divisions versus two] will enable more ammunition to be delivered at the target in three days .than the estimated requirements listed in reference (a) for ten days.
>
> * * * * *
>
> It is believed that the excess of 5," 14" and 16" capabilities over your estimate of requirements will more than offset the apparent shortage in 6" and 8" capabilities.[117]

On 24 November 1944, Major General Schmidt replied to this letter:

> 1. The arrangements set forth in the basic letter for naval gunfire support are concurred in with the exception of the time allotted for preliminary bombardment. . . . The amount of ammunition allotted appears to be adequate. . . .
>
> 2. a. . . .
>
> b. Allow four days for the preliminary bombardment. This would allow for more deliberate firing. . . . It theoretically would involve no increase in the expenditure of ammunition but rather a slower rate of fire.
>
> 3. It is recommended that, if consistent with other considerations, the plan outlined in para 2(b) above be adopted and that the preliminary bombardment begin on D-4 Day.[118]

Upon receipt of this further reply from the Commander V Amphibious Corps, Vice Admiral Turner sent the whole correspondence on to Admiral

[116] Headquarters VAC, letter, 24 Oct. 1944; and Headquarters FMF Ser 00080 of 26 Oct. 1944, subj: Naval Gunfire Requirements.

[117] (a) COMPHIBFORPAC to COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS, letters, Ser 000209 of 15 Nov. 1944; (b) Ser 000199 of 7 Nov. 1944; (c) Ser 000203 of 9 Nov. 1944.

[118] FIFTHPHIBCORPS, letter, Ser 02/118/0012A of 24 Nov. 1944.

Spruance for a final decision, since it was not within his realm of authority to change Admiral Spruance's requirements that:

> A Fast Carrier Task Force with a heavy concentration of battleship strength will attack the Empire as a preliminary covering operation, the first strike coinciding with the commencement of the surface ship bombardment of Iwo Jima. . . .
>
> Surface ship bombardment by the full Fire Support Group will be commenced on D minus 3 and will be continued until no longer required by the assault forces. . . .[119]

Vice Admiral Turner's letter and Admiral Spruance's reply are reproduced herewith.

CAP/:16-3(7) OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER 90/0y
AMPHIBIOUS FORCES, U. S. PACIFIC FLEET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
Serial: 000243

DECLASSIFIED 30 NOV 1944
DOD DIR. 5200.9, Sept. 27, 1958
2NC-M Ltr Date 10/6/61

From: Commander Amphibious Forces, U. S. Pacific Fleet.
To : Commander FIFTH Fleet.

Subject: Naval Gunfire Requirements.

References: (a) ComGen FMFPac Top Secret Ltr. 1975-60, 01/150, Serial 000182 of 26 November 1944.

Enclosure: (A) Copy of Reference (a) with Enclosures.

1. In view of the recommendation in reference (a) that four days be alloted to the preliminary Naval and Air bombardment of [redacted], approval is requested provided:

(a) There is no objection by Commander FIFTH Fleet based on the general strategical situation; and

(b) The fast carrier strike on the Empire can be delivered on Dog minus FOUR instead of Dog minus THREE.

R. K. TURNER.

Copy to:
ComGen FMFPac
ComGen V PhibCorps
ComPhibGroup ONE (with enclosure).

Vice Admiral Turner's request for naval and air bombardment.

[119] COMFIFTHFLEET Op Plan, 13–14, Annex B, paras 2(e), 3(a).

A16-3(2e)

COMMANDER FIFTH FLEET
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
FLAGSHIP OF THE COMMANDER

Serial: 00001

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
DOD DIR. 5200.9, Sept. 27, 1958
date 12/19/72

From: Commander ~~FIFTH~~ Fleet.
To : Commander Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Naval Gunfire Requirements, WORKMAN.

Reference: (a) ComPhibsPac Serial 000243 of 30 November 1944.

1. The recommendation of Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, that surface ship bombardment of WORKMAN be commenced on D minus 4 day is not approved for the following reasons:

(a) The initial surface bombardment must be simultaneous with the initial carrier attack upon the TOKYO area. The carrier attacks will be continued there for three days if practicable, but it may prove desirable or necessary to discontinue attacks after two days or less. If the attacks were made on D minus 4 and D minus 3 days, time would then be available to the enemy for recovery and reinforcement early enough to initiate threatening air operations at the objective by D day.

DOD DIR. 5200.9 Declassified Sept. 27, 1958
2NC-M 12/19/72

(b) The situation at WORKMAN will be different from that encountered at SAIPAN for the reason that by D day the enemy personnel and fixed defenses at WORKMAN will have been under heavy shore based air attack for a considerable period of time. This prolonged air bombardment, which was not undertaken at SAIPAN, may be considered at least as effective as the recommended additional day of surface ship bombardment.

(c) The trench and pill box defense system at IWO JIMA is strong and must be taken by assault, supported, until shore artillery can be emplaced, by intense naval gunfire on D day. There will be no early opportunity for replacement of naval ammunition, a large proportion of which must be saved for support on D day. There is a limit to the quantity of ammunition which can be made available for pre D day bombardment and no advantage is seen in delivering that quantity in four days rather than in three.

R. A. Spruance

Copy to:
ComGenFMFPac

R. A. SPRUANCE.

Admiral Spruance's reply to Turner two days later.

OUTSIDE FACTORS

All during October and November, while the gunfire bombardment was being worked up in detail, the requirements of General MacArthur's campaign in the Philippines were having considerable impact upon the gunfire support ships desired at Iwo Jima.

As Commander Amphibious Support Force (CTF 52) related in his Action Report:

> While CTF 52 was enroute Ulithi, it became apparent that delay in releasing certain ships then engaged in operations against Luzon, as well as damage sustained by these ships, would not only prevent their assembly at Ulithi, but would prevent their participation at Iwo Jima, and that extensive changes to existing plans, particularly the ship's gunfire support plans, would be necessary.[120]

When it became apparent that the 16-inch gunned old battleships *Colorado* and *West Virginia* would not be available, the new 16-inch gunned battleships *North Carolina* and *Washington* from the Fast Carrier Task Forces were substituted initially. They then were withdrawn by Admiral Spruance before the Fast Carrier Task Forces sailed from Pearl and directed to remain with the Fast Carrier Task Forces until Dog Day.

In the process of meeting the stated requirements, a new light cruiser, the *Vicksburg,* was slated to be attached to Cruiser Division Five to provide a five-ship division in lieu of the normal four-ship division. The initially designated heavy ships together with those finally scraped together when it was found that the ones helping General MacArthur would not be available for the three-day pre-Dog Day bombardment, were as follows:

Initially Designated	*Finally Available*
OBB-35 *Texas*	OBB-33 *Arkansas*
OBB-36 *Nevada*	OBB-34 *New York*
OBB-40 *New Mexico*	OBB-35 *Texas*
OBB-41 *Mississippi*	OBB-36 *Nevada*
OBB-44 *California*	OBB-42 *Idaho*
OBB-45 *Colorado*	OBB-43 *Tennessee*
OBB-48 *West Virginia*	CA-24 *Pensacola*
CA-24 *Pensacola*	CA-25 *Salt Lake City*
CA-25 *Salt Lake City*	CA-27 *Chester*
CA-27 *Chester*	CA-37 *Tuscaloosa*
CA-37 *Tuscaloosa*	CL-86 *Vicksburg*

A glance at the hull numbers of the old battleships will show that the

[120] CTF 52 Iwo Jima Report, 22 Feb. 1945, p. 3.

four oldest battleships in commission, including one with 12-inch guns, and all built prior to World War I were the ones substituted for the larger gunned old battleships built during and subsequent to World War I. The *West Virginia, Colorado, California, Mississippi,* and *New Mexico* were in the Heavy Covering Unit supporting the Lingayen landing.

On Dog Day, the new battleships *North Carolina* (BB-55) and *Washington* (BB-56), plus the *Indianapolis* (CA-35) and two light cruisers, the *Santa Fe* (CL-60) and *Biloxi* (CL-80), joined the ships listed above as "Finally Available" in the gun bombardment of Iwo Jima.

Additionally, that valiant old warrior and fine shooting ship, the *West Virginia,* was finally sprung from General MacArthur and Lingayen Gulf. After a fast trip from Leyte Gulf to Ulithi and a priority round-the-clock replenishment, she made the 900-mile run to Iwo at 18 knots, earned a "Well Done" from CINCPAC, and by noon had joined the Dog Day bombardment forces. The *New Mexico, Mississippi* and *California* all had had bouts with kamikazes at Lingayen and needed Navy yard attention, as did the *Colorado,* so they could not join in the fray.

OPINION

Whether a more complete destruction of Japanese defensive installations might have been accomplished before the landing, has minor relevance in comparison with the fact that pre-landing naval air bombardment and gunfire was adequate: (a) to establish the Marines ashore on Iwo Jima; and (b) in supporting the Marines once ashore so that they could do their intended task, the conquest of Iwo Jima.

The point worth discussing is what led the naval commander to deny a cup-running-over of pre-landing gunfire support at Iwo Jima.

I had not reached the Iwo Jima Campaign in my discussions with Admiral Turner prior to his sudden death. When the issue of pre-landing gun bombardment was raised with Admiral Spruance in 1961, a question which had been raised with him many times by others, his softly spoken and somewhat tired answer was:

> It was judged to be impractical for a variety of good strategical and logistical reasons, which you will find in some detail in the answer to Turner's letter in which he recommended four days of pre-landing gun bombardment.[121]

In Admiral Spruance's biography, it is stated in regard to this issue:

[121] *Spruance.*

> When the bombardment [of Iwo Jima] started, the tactical surprise at Iwo would be lost, and the longer the pre-landing bombardment continued, the greater the likelihood that the landing would be opposed by aircraft from Japan. . . . Against strong argument by the Marines, Spruance held to his decision to bombard for only three days, but he did authorize Admiral Blandy, the Bombardment Group Commander, to extend this for one day, if, in his judgment at the time, it would be profitable. Admiral Blandy did not use the additional day.[122]

Despite what has been said elsewhere, a review of the written orders and the letters regarding the pre-landing naval gunfire requirements at Iwo Jima indicate that, from the record, there was unanimity in the hierarchy of the Expeditionary Force as to what should be accomplished in connection with preparing Iwo Jima for the assault landing. There was strong disagreement as to whether the task could or should be accomplished in three or four days. Vice Admiral Turner agreed to change his orders accordingly and undertake the four-day task, if Admiral Spruance would concur.

At the next higher and determining level of Fleet Command, Admiral Spruance had the broader chore to balance this pre-landing gunfire requirement of the Landing Force of the Expeditionary Force with the requirement that the whole of the Expeditionary Force did not get clobbered by aircraft flown down from Japan before the Landing Force was established ashore. The one real post-landing offensive flight which the Japanese did fly down, after the Fast Carrier Task Force had swept the great majority of aircraft off the airfields in Central Japan, sank one jeep carrier, sent a large Fleet carrier back to Pearl Harbor for major repairs and damaged another jeep carrier, a large net carrier and an LST.

Also, Admiral Spruance had to accomplish the Iwo Jima task without taking his eyes off the Okinawa operations, which already twice postponed was now scheduled to start only six weeks later on 1 April 1945.

April 1st was considered a bed rock date. From the seaman's point of view, the lengthy Okinawa operation had to be completed before the typhoon season dropped in on Okinawa shortly after May 1st. Therefore, opening the assault could not be further postponed beyond April 1st.

By conducting in mid-February successful air attacks on Japanese aircraft factories in the Empire, and at the same time sweeping off the Empire airfields their reduced ration of operating aircraft, the Japanese would obviously be hampered in their defensive tasks at Okinawa, as well as in the air attacks on the Expeditionary Force at Iwo Jima.

[122] Forrestel, *Spruance*, p. 168.

The winter rains of 1944–45 stalled the airbase construction on Leyte and on Mindoro in the Central Philippines. To partially fill the gap left by the absence of anticipated land-based air support, a number of jeep carriers of the Pacific Fleet had to be kept available to General MacArthur in Philippine waters.

Since many of the same transports and many of the same gunfire support ships, and even, in some cases, the same LSTs and LCIs served the amphibious operations occurring in the Central Pacific Area and in the Southwest Pacific Area, any delay in releasing the ships after an operation in one theater reacted immediately on the operations scheduled in the other. This was happening for Iwo Jima.

As COMINCH put it:

> The Philippine operations necessitated last minute changes and reduced the total number of ships which had been previously allocated to the Iwo Jima operation. This applied primarily to battleships, cruisers and destroyers for the Joint Expeditionary Force, although other forces were affected to a lesser extent. . . .[123]

The delays in General MacArthur's undertaking his Luzon campaign had prevented an early switch of the combatant ships of the Pacific Fleet from that operation to DETACHMENT. It was 27 January 1945, before most of the ships of the Gunfire and Covering Force and the Gunboat Support Force were available at Ulithi to be rearmed and replenished and rest a bit before sailing on 9–10 February for the Iwo Jima assault rehearsal at Saipan-Tinian. Two of the gun bombardment battleships did not join until arrival at Saipan. As has been noted above, the *West Virginia* did not join up until Dog Day at Iwo.

OPINION—MILITARILY SOUND

At the higher levels of naval command it was appreciated, in January 1945, that the Japanese, militarily, had been pushed off balance by a series of United States military victories in the Pacific.

It was militarily sound to try to keep the Japanese off balance and moving backwards.

The schedule of the Joint Chiefs for the seizure of key points along the way to Japan was a tight one and called for continued use of the air and gun resources of much of the Pacific Fleet.

[123] COMINCH P-0012, "Amphibious Operations, Capture of Iwo Jima," p. 1.

Actually, way back on 1 April 1945, when writing his report on Iwo Jima, Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith provided the only answer there ever can be when tactical limitations must be imposed because of strategical considerations:

> An analysis of tactical operations which fails to establish the limitations imposed by strategical considerations, results in an incomplete and distorted evaluation.[124]

This was the answer about the pre-landing gunfire bombardment in 1945. It is the answer in 1971. And no one knew it better than that gallant Marine, Holland M. Smith.

In an interview printed in the *New York Times* of 16 March 1945, Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith stated the case for Admiral Spruance's decision in regard to the pre-landing gun bombardment at Iwo Jima about as succinctly as it can be done, although at the time he may not have been thinking of this particular factor:

> Capture of Iwo Jima was considered essential by those in whose hands the destiny of our nation lies. The cost of winning this objective was no doubt weighed carefully against the importance of having this island as an operating base in speeding the ultimate defeat of Japan. When the capture of an enemy position is necessary in winning a war, it is not within our province to evaluate the cost in money, time, equipment, or, most of all, human lives. We are told what our objective is to be and we prepare to do the job, knowing that all evaluations have been considered by those who give us our orders.

When General Holland Smith turned to writing his memoirs, however, he reverted to a very limited viewpoint and wrote in regard to the allotted pre-landing gunfire bombardment:

> Thus were we defeated—a group of trained and experienced land fighters, our full realization of the necessity for naval gunfire based on many previous island operations, again overridden by the naval mind. Finding ourselves in this dilemma we had tried our best to enlighten the high command, feeling that our judgment would be respected, but naval expediency won again.[125]

This post-war opinion flies directly in the face of that of many others who also were there at Iwo Jima and who believed as Robert Sherrod, famous Marine historian and journalist of World War II, who in a despatch from Iwo Jima to *Time Magazine* in early March 1945, wrote:

> On Iwo, the Japs dug themselves in so deeply that all the explosives in the world could hardly have reached them.[126]

[124] CTF 56, Iwo Jima Report, p. 2.
[125] Smith, *Coral and Brass,* p. 246–47.
[126] *Time Magazine,* 12 Mar. 1945.

As has been stated previously there is a limit to what the naval gun could effectively accomplish. In the opinion of Commander Support Force (Blandy), and of Commander Gunfire and Covering Force (Rodgers), and of the Second-in-Command (Hill), this largely had been accomplished.

Admiral Hill, who was Second-in-Command to Vice Admiral Turner at Iwo Jima, and who, in due time, relieved him there wrote in 1968:

> Based on my knowledge of the called gunfire on Admiral Turner's circuits which were being constantly monitored by my staff (for information, both for me and for General Schmidt), it was my opinion, at the time, that most of the targets suitable for destruction by naval gunfire had been eliminated. Some of the few remaining targets were promptly knocked out by call fire after they had disclosed their positions. Their number was insignificant.[127]

That General Kuribayashi, the Japanese Commander at Iwo Jima, did not agree with the Commander Expeditionary Troops in his post-war opinion is evidenced by a Japanese source, which quotes a despatch Lieutenant General Kuribayashi radioed the Chief of General Staff in Tokyo upon the completion of the pre-landing bombardment:

> We need to consider the power of bombardment from ships. The beach positions we made on this island by using many materials, days, and great efforts were destroyed within three days so that they were nearly unable to be used again.[128]

Major General Harry Schmidt, the Corps Commander of all the Marines, in his Iwo Jima Action Report stated:

> The naval gunfire on D-Day and thereafter was highly effective. The preliminary bombardment did not meet expectations, because of the shortage of naval gunfire support ships and because of lost time in the preliminary bombardment due to bad weather and the interference of mine sweeping activities and UDT operations which forced longer range fire or a diversion of available naval gunfire in support of these special operations.[129]

The modern adage, even in the military, is that one must please the customer. Only on this basis, can it be said, in the same sorrowful tone as the Marine "Iwo Jima" states:

> Suffice it to say, that the Navy had not allowed itself sufficient time to perform its mission adequately.[130]

[127] HWH to GCD, memorandum, 18 Jan. 1968.

[128] Hon. Major Y. Horie, "Explanation of Japanese Defense Plan and Battle of Iwo Jima," 25 Jan. 1946, Appendix, p. i.

[129] COMGENFIFTHPHIBCORPS Iwo Jima Report, 20 May 1945, Encl. (A), p. 104.

[130] Whitman S. Bartley, *Iwo Jima; Amphibious Epic,* U.S. Marine Corps Monograph (Washington: Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1954), p. 202.

But this misses the real point, quite completely, which was that while more Marine lives might possibly be lost at Iwo Jima, many more lives of those serving the United States in the far Pacific would be saved by giving the Japanese the one-two punch while they were already off balance. This was done by making low-level attacks on aircraft factories in Japan to reduce the aircraft available at upcoming Okinawa and by sweeping up the Japanese aircraft from the airfields of Japan, so that the Marines could continue to have the active gun and air and logistic support from ships just offshore at Iwo and Okinawa.

A far sounder judgment of the Marine historians was given by Major General Donald M. Weller, USMC, who as a lieutenant colonel at Iwo Jima was Naval Gunfire Officer on the staff of both Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, and that of Major General Harry Schmidt.

He wrote at the conclusion of his September 1954 article in the *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings:*

> But this fact remains. By the night of D DAY, the strongest defended objective in amphibious history had been forced. *The fact that the D DAY casualties were lighter than those sustained for the next seven days bears witness to the effectiveness of the pre-D DAY and D DAY gunfire.*[131]

[131] Donald M. Weller, "Salvo—Splash!," *US Naval Institute Proceedings,* Vol. 80 (September, 1954), p. 1021.

CHAPTER XXIV

Okinawa and Four Stars

JOINT AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE COMMITTEE

In trying to locate some of the important background documents concerning materiel phases of amphibious warfare, particularly during 1944 and 1945, when materiel advances were substantial, it was something of a shock to learn that the records of the Joint Amphibious Warfare Committee were not available in the files of COMINCH or CNO, or elsewhere, not having been located since World War II.[1]

The Joint Amphibious Warfare Committee was organized in early October 1943, after several memorandums were exchanged between General Marshall and Admiral King, upon the initiative of the latter.

Admiral King said in his memorandum of 20 September 1943:

> Our war experience has continually demonstrated the manifold problems in amphibious warfare that must be constantly handled. The analyses of the various amphibious operations that we have undertaken have brought to light many deficiencies which we must seek to remedy for future operations. Some of these deficiencies pertain specifically to the Army, some to the Navy, but a large portion of them are of a Joint character and should be Jointly recognized and Jointly remedied.[2]

The charter for the committee directed it to coordinate the large volume of ideas and suggestions for new types of amphibious equipment being received from field commanders of the Services, and to reduce these ideas and suggestions to definite requirements which could be turned over to the National Defense Research Committee, the research adjuncts of the War and Navy Departments, as well as to various commands working in the area of operational developments. The Committee, when it was established, considered equipment and devices which were generated anywhere in the Armed Forces, determined whether they were applicable to amphibious

[1] Federal Records of World War II, Vol. II, Military Agencies, p. 54. National Archives Publication 51–8.

[2] COMINCH to C/S Army, letter, FF1/A3–1 Ser 03248, 20 Sep. 1943.

warfare, and formulated amphibious combat requirements for those which were applicable.

In its charter, the Committee also was directed: (1) to study amphibious operations, (2) to make technical plans and (3) to follow up Joint amphibious operations and see that operating plans were implemented, including the training necessary for them.

During the formation period of this Committee, Vice Admiral Edwards who became the Deputy to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, recommended this not be a new unit under the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization and Admiral King penciled "yes" on the memorandum.[3]

The first meeting of the Joint Amphibious Warfare Committee was held on 11 October 1943. Brigadier General Hull (later General, USA) and Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly (later Admiral, U. S. Navy), as the senior representatives present of the Army and Navy, got the Committee off on the right foot.

The Committee had permanent naval representation from COMINCH Headquarters, the Marine Corps, from Naval Operations, and Army and Army Air Force representation from the War Department General Staff and from the technical branches of the Army.

In November 1943, Captain I. N. Kiland, who had started in amphibious warfare at Guadalcanal, was the senior permanent Naval member of this committee. Captain H. W. Need and Captain J. H. Doyle (both tested amphibians) were his principal naval assistants.

In April 1944, the Joint Amphibious Warfare Committee was given jurisdiction over amphibious projects arising from or assigned to the Joint Experimental and Testing Board.[4]

Despite the fact that the Joint Amphibious Warfare Committee is not either referenced or mentioned in Rear Admiral Furer's very excellent book *Administration of the Navy Department in World War II,* the work of the Committee was important not only in the technical sense, but also in the broad operational field of amphibious warfare.

INGREDIENTS OF AMPHIBIOUS SUCCESS

There were many ingredients in the successes achieved by Admiral Kelly

[3] (a) Asst. Chief of Staff Plans (Cooke) to C/S (Edwards) Memo of 29 Aug. 1943, and Edwards endorsement thereon; (b) Deputy C/S Army memo without file number to Admiral King of 5 Apr. 1944; (c) COMINCH to C/S Army, letter, Ser 00841 of 13 Mar. 1944. Subj: Joint Amphibious Warfare Development Committee, Appointment of.

[4] COMINCH to C/S Army, letter, Ser 001189 of 15 Apr. 1944.

Turner in the amphibious campaigns in the Pacific. In listing these in 1961, Admiral Turner thought the principal and most important ingredient was people, but in his opinion there were other essential ingredients.[5] Two of these other ingredients mentioned by him at that time were organization and close air support.

(1) Organization

It is obvious that the principal task in war is fighting. There is also an auxiliary task which makes successful fighting possible, but whose requirements make adequate concentration on the principal task difficult. This is administration.

When Rear Admiral Turner started out in the South Pacific Force, he was vested with both operational and administrative command of the forces assigned regularly to the Amphibious Forces, South Pacific Force. In his order announcing assumption of command, he delegated the administrative duties to his three principal subordinates.

When shifting to the Central Pacific Area, an organizational system was established whereby all the major subdivisions of the Amphibious Force were assigned to the Amphibious Force Administrative Command for administration at all times. In addition, operational control was held by the Administrative Command between campaigns and until the amphibious ships were gathered together just prior to the rehearsal exercise at the start of a campaign. Then, throughout the rehearsal and the amphibious operation, operational control was held by Commander Amphibious Forces, Fifth Fleet or by Commander Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, the two offices occupied by Admiral Turner in 1943, 1944, and 1945.

In this way, Richmond Kelly Turner and his staff were freed of a great deal of essential administrative and rear area operational handling, and able to concentrate on fighting.

(2) People

Before shoving off for Iwo Jima, and in reply to a personal letter of 20 January 1945, from the right-hand man to Vice Admiral Randall Jacobs,

[5] Turner.

Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Vice Admiral Turner got off a long four-page letter to Rear Admiral Denfeld.

Besides taking the basic position that, during the war, he was opposed to the shift of officers in command of units merely for the sake of rotation to shore duty, Vice Admiral Turner offered Rear Admiral Denfeld opinions and advice in regard to the top people under him who were making the amphibious campaigns a success.

There are only a few of that unusual brand of men and naval officers who have the threefold characteristics which mark them as great operational wartime leaders. These are: (1) basic capability to fight well; (2) the stamina to thrive on fighting; and (3) the courage and willingness to stay with the fight, improving as they learn. Richmond Kelly Turner was never able to accommodate himself to the Bureau of Personnel wartime policy that was quite sound for some 98 percent of the Navy. This policy provided that officers be rotated yearly between sea and shore duty, so that the Shore Establishment would be in step with the requirements of the Fleet and the Fleet would be manned by officers who were not exhausted from their war efforts.

The only three senior naval officers who were in the amphibious game in the Pacific before Rear Admiral Turner joined it in June 1942, who had started the long war in an amphibious command and stayed with the Amphibious Forces afloat and fought through assault landing after assault landing in the broad Pacific were (with ranks at the end of the war):

Rear Admiral L. F. Reifsnider
Commodore P. S. Theiss
Commodore H. B. Knowles

Several other senior officers had joined the Turner Pacific amphibious team during the bitter months of 1942 or before Tarawa and stayed with it until Japan surrendered. These included (again with rank at end of war):

Vice Admiral T. S. Wilkinson
Vice Admiral H. W. Hill
Commodore D. M. Loomis
Commodore H. C. Flanagan
Commodore John B. McGovern

In regard to the sending to shore duty of some of the senior amphibians, Vice Admiral Turner wrote as follows:

> Knowles is our best Squadron Commander, and I certainly cannot afford to

lose him at this time—or ever, as far as that goes. I hope to get two stars for him before he leaves (if ever) as he deserves them, if anyone does.

* * * * *

McGovern is the next best Transron Commander to Knowles. He has been a Transron Commander for only three months, and is most desirous of staying. I cannot afford to lose him now or at any time.[6]

It is noted here for the record that despite repeated favorable letters from Rear Admiral and Vice Admiral Turner, Commodore Knowles' promotion to rear admiral was not achieved during the war.

(3) Air Support for Amphibious Operations

Speaking of air support for amphibious operations Admiral Turner in 1961 recalled:

[6] RKT to Admiral Denfeld, letter, 3 Feb. 1945.



Turner Collection

Vice Admiral Turner with two hard-working assistants, Captain Richard P. Whitehead and Commodore Paul S. Theiss, April 1945.

> When Whitehead arrived, proper air support for an amphibious operation was a difficult theory. When he left, it was a difficult but accomplished fact.[7]

In mid-April 1945, Captain Richard F. Whitehead whom Admiral Turner thought had done so much to develop air support and control for amphibious landings was relieved by Rear Admiral Alfred M. Pride as Commander Air Support Control Units of the Pacific Fleet.

The theory mentioned by Admiral Turner was to coordinate and control the air support to be rendered by all air units of all Services within the immediate area of the amphibious landing. The problem was manifold, but several major troublesome aspects included problems of communication and coordination, the latter arising from the ever-present reluctance of aviators of all Services to place their aircraft under the direct command or control of other arms of their own Service, or of non-aviation commands or commanders. This reluctance arose from a creed which was a baffling combination of widely divergent, but strongly held views, on the use of air power mixed in with a need of naval aviators (with their eyes on their professional futures) not to lose their close aviation ties by doing duty in a command that was preponderately non-aviation in purpose and in deed. Their creed was frosted by a genuine desire of the aviators that their risky and difficult operations should fully exploit the capabilities of the aviation weapon.

One story relating to air support told to me by three different people concerned the then Captain Richard P. Whitehead (now Vice Admiral, Retired) who was Commander Air Support Control Units in the Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, for the Iwo Jima and Okinawa campaigns and who held the same very important job, with a somewhat different title, when controlling air support for Kelly Turner during the Marshall and Marianas campaigns.

Captain Whitehead had a bit of a rough time during his early working with the Admiral, but in due time, after some real knock-down drag-out arguments, Kelly Turner became very fond of him.

After one such long drawn out argument, the Admiral told the Captain:

> You have got to stop pushing me around.

Captain Whitehead is reported to have replied:

> I will, if you will put in my next fitness report that you asked me to stop pushing you around.[8]

[7] Turner.

[8] Ballentine.

1944 PLANNING FOR THE DEFEAT OF JAPAN

Fleet Admiral King, Fleet Admiral Leahy, and Fleet Admiral Nimitz all have left documentary evidence that, commencing in late 1944, each believed the defeat of Japan could be accomplished by sea and air power alone, and that an invasion of Japan by ground troops was unnecessary. For example, Fleet Admiral King wrote:

> Upon Marshall's insistence, which also reflected MacArthur's views, the Joint Chiefs had prepared plans for landings in Kyushu and eventually in the Tokyo plain. King and Leahy did not like the idea, but as unanimous decisions were necessary in the Joint Chiefs meetings, they reluctantly acquiesced, feeling that in the end sea power would accomplish the defeat of Japan, as proved to be the case.[9]

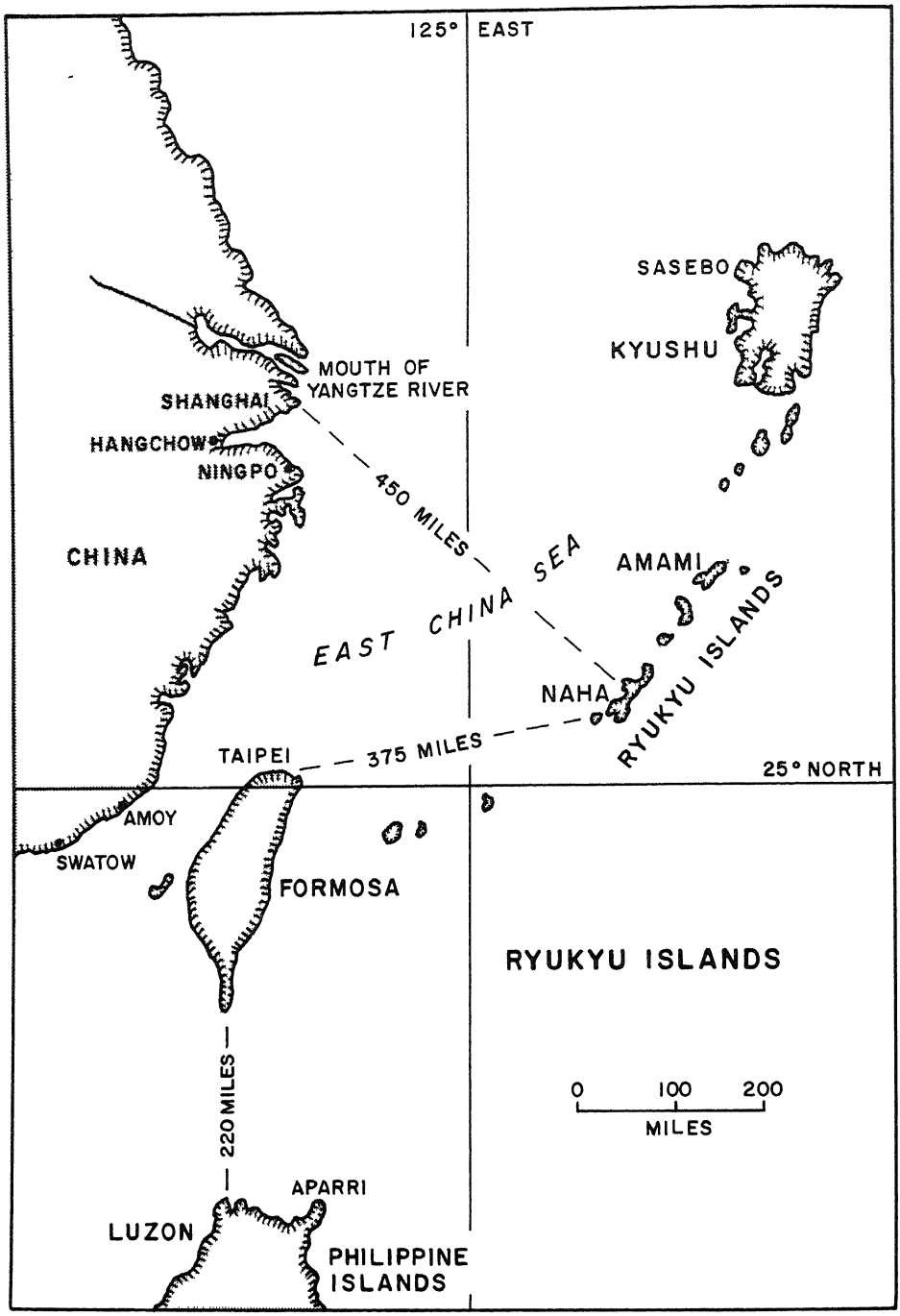
Without knowing the background thinking which brought these three extremely capable war leaders to their similar conclusion, perhaps they reasoned along the following lines which are contained in Outline Plan FARRAGUT found in COMINCH files and dated 20 June 1944:

> Certain fears must now torment Japan's rulers with growing intensity as our forces close in on her:
>
> 1. She lacks developed resources for a concentrated struggle with our nation and, with growing realization, she is reminded that she has never before fought a first-class power.
> 2. Afflicted with delusions of world conquest, abetted by an alliance of circumstances with Germany, she finds the early belief that success would be swift and easy, a fatal mirage.
> 3. Never before invaded, she faces a threat of humiliation before the world in that approaching prospect.
> 4. Lacking also the resources for rapid reconstruction, she faces a severe test of the morale of her people as the scale of destruction steadily increases.
>
> Forgotten by Italy and deserted by Germany, the remaining nation of the disintegrated axis can achieve nothing by waging war beyond the point of invasion.

Despite an underlying disbelief in its necessity, these three naval officers at the top of the naval hierarchy all vigorously participated in planning and preparation for an effective amphibious assault on the Japanese homeland.

On 30 June 1944, the Joint Staff Planning Committee presented to the Joint Chiefs of Staff a weighty paper titled "Operations Against Japan Subsequent to Formosa." This was their answer to a directive from the Joint

[9] *King's Record*, p. 598.



Distance chart, Ryukyu Islands and Eastern China.

Chiefs to consider the strategy of the war in Asia and to combine it with a new plan for the defeat of Japan.[10]

The title of the JPS paper is significant because it indicates that on 30 June 1944, Formosa was definitely on the time-table of the Joint Chiefs. The paper itself was significant since it established that our concept of future operations included:

> a. Concurrent advances through the Ryukus, Bonins and Southeast China Coast for the purpose of intensifying the blockade and air bombardment of Japan, and creating a favorable situation for:—
>
> 1. An amphibious assault on Kyushu for the purpose of further reducing Japanese capabilities by engaging and fixing major enemy forces and establishing a tactical condition favorable to:
>
> (a) A decisive stroke against the industrial heart of Japan by means of an amphibious attack through the Tokyo plain assisted by continued pressure from Kyushu.

In this JCS approved paper, the assault on Kyushu was scheduled for 1 October 1945, and the assault on the Tokyo Plain at the end of December 1945.[11] The Combined Chiefs of Staff noted formal approval of this paper on 11 September 1944.

The vagaries of Chinese resistance to the Japanese forces in China were a constantly changing factor in the question as to whether United States amphibious assault forces should land on the mainland of China. In late 1944 or early 1945, Japanese troops drove further into Central China and closer to Chungking, since 1937 the wartime capital of China, and in 1944 a major airbase for United States Army Air Force contingents in China. As this Japanese advance went on and on, some military planners swung to the view that the establishment of United States forces in the coastal area of China was essential in order to provide massive logistic support for the Chinese armies.

The much later decision not to assault Formosa, or at least to hold that assault in abeyance, did not kill planning for the East Coast of China venture. And this "Move into China" talk influenced the assigned mission of the Expeditionary Force which had the immediate chore of assaulting Okinawa, since they were told that this seizure was to be undertaken in order:

> To support further operations in the regions bordering on the East China Sea.[12]

[10] JCS 924/CCS 381.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] COMFIFTHFLT Op Plan 1–45, para 2.

OKINAWA OR HOKKAIDO OR BOTH?

The Ryukyus, a good step away to the southwest from Kyushu, were a backdoor approach toward the center of the Japanese Empire. The much larger island of Hokkaido, just a short step away to the north from the main Japanese island of Honshu, was a side door approach to Japan from the Aleutians.

In order to provide adequate air bases from which to conduct land-based air attacks on Honshu, there was much sentiment among the JCS planners in October and November 1944, to make two simultaneous steps forward and to take Hokkaido at the same time as Okinawa in the Ryukyus.

However, making two assaults at or about the same time would require that our Pacific Ocean naval forces be split into about equal parts each of which would be a bit inadequate for its appointed task. The easily predictable bad weather around Hokkaido in April made an assault during that month most hazardous from the seaman's point of view. These overpowering reasons, combined with a real lack of adequate ship and craft amphibious resources and some tightness in troop supply, argued against this double-barreled approach to Japan. As the fresh year of 1945 came on the scene, a broader appreciation of the above reasons and of Japanese defensive capabilities caused plans to assault Okinawa and Hokkaido at the same time to be dropped and the available resources to be assigned only to the Okinawa assault.[18]

There were those who were opposed to assaulting Hokkaido, but who thought that the requirements for additional air bases to soften up Honshu and Kyushu would necessitate:

1. the seizure of areas on the Chinese mainland opposite the southern tip of Kyushu, i.e., the Ningpo area (south of Shanghai);
2. areas in the Shantung Peninsula of northeastern China, opposite the Tokyo Plain; and perhaps
3. areas in Korea.

Since the utilization of some 16,000 planes was being proposed for the invasion of Southern Japan, it was obvious that airfields by the half-dozen lot

[18] (a) JPS 174th and 176th Meetings, minutes, 11 Oct. and 25 Oct. 1944; (b) JCS 924/5 Operations for the Defeat of Japan, 27 Oct. 1944; (c) General Arnold's Memo of 6 Nov. 1944, on subject JCS paper; (d) Memo by COMINCH-CNO, Operations for the Defeat of Japan, 3 Nov. 1944.

would be required if the figure of 16,000 planes had any reality. These beliefs led to the planning for LONG TOM.[14]

LONG TOM

When departing for Okinawa, a major planning operation was simmering on the PHIBSPAC back-burner. It was called LONG TOM. Received from CINCPAC by COMPHIBSPAC on 12 March 1945, with its Dog Day set for 15 August 1945, LONG TOM promised to be an operational headache. It proposed the landing of a very large amphibious assault force (six divisions) in the Chusan-Ningpo area on the east coast of China. Chusan was an archipelago of about 100 islands in the East China Sea at the entrance to Hangchow Bay.

COMPHIBSPAC pointed out to CINCPAC that LONG TOM involved great difficulty from the seaman's point of view:

> Many of the channels are narrow and crooked. The currents are strong and erratic; the water is muddy over a large portion of the area; visibility is frequently low; and the existing charts cannot be relied on for close-in detail.[15]

Fortunately LONG TOM died on the planning vine.

ICEBERG

The operation for assaulting the Ryukyus was known as ICEBERG. It included the main assault on Okinawa initially planned for 1 March 1945, and subsequent assaults on subsidiary islands, of which the first was planned to be on Ie Shima off the Motobu Peninsula of Okinawa on Dog Day plus 30.

On 25 October 1944, CINCPOA's Joint Staff issued its study of ICEBERG. It was not until 9 November 1944, that Vice Admiral Turner issued to his staff his personal guideline memorandum for ICEBERG.

ICEBERG introduced a new element into the planning chores of Vice Admiral Turner and his staff. This was the necessity of planning two major

[14] (a) JCS 1215, Contributory Operations on the China Coast North of Swatow, 31 Dec. 1944; (b) JCS to CINCPOA, CM-OUT-22016, 16 Jan 1945; (c) JCS 1079 Report by Joint Planning Staff, "Tactical Air Forces Required to accomplish Earliest Possible Conclusive Defeat of Japan," 29 Sep. 1944. Approved by JCS 14 Oct. 1944.

[15] COMPHIBSPAC to CINCPOA, letter, Ser 000199 of 20 Apr. 1945. See also COMPHIBSPAC to COMTHIRDPHIBPAC, letter, Ser 000210 of 22 May 1945.

operations (ICEBERG and DETACHMENT) at the same time with two different Expeditionary Troop Commanders. As has been told, Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, USMC, commanded the Expeditionary Troops for DETACHMENT (Iwo Jima) and although working with him did not guarantee a fair breeze and calm seas, the relationship was based on proven competence displayed over more than twelve months of successful hard campaigning.

For ICEBERG, Lieutenant General Simon B. Buckner, Jr., Commanding General Tenth Army, was Commander Expeditionary Troops. ICEBERG was even larger than DETACHMENT, where preparations had to be made to land a corps. ICEBERG was the only amphibious assault operation launched from the Central Pacific Ocean Area which involved the landing of a Field Army (two or more corps with auxiliary troops).

In effect, during November and December of 1944, and January of 1945, the planners on PHIBSPAC Staff were riding two horses at full gallop around the planning track, one of which was not fully trained in the Kelly Turner style of amphibious teamwork.

COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

For ICEBERG, CINCPOA modified his previous order referring to command relationships between the Expeditionary Force Commander and the Expeditionary Troop Commander, rationalizing that:

> The operations which involve the establishment of the forces of the Pacific Ocean Areas in the Ryukyus differ from previous operations in the Central Pacific campaign, in that, although initially they will be amphibious in nature, they will involve the use of a Field Army in one or more large islands for a considerable period. Also the positions to be occupied are so close to major enemy bases that active combat conditions will continue for an extended period. . . .[16]

The new order provided that General Buckner, under Admiral Spruance's command, would have responsibility for the development and defense of Okinawa as soon as the amphibious phases of the operations were completed and he was in command ashore. Previously, this responsibility had remained

[16] CINCPAC-CINCPOA, letter, 000147 of 21 Nov. 1944, subj: Command Relationships on the Ryukyus Operation, p. 1. See also CINCPOA, letter, Ser 0080 of 16 Aug. 1944; subj: Command Relationships; COMFIFTHFLT Op Plan 1–45, Annex I; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Op Plan 14–44, 31 Dec. 1945.

with the amphibious commanders until the troop operations ashore had secured the objective. The new arrangement provided that final responsibility for the defense and development of the Ryukyus would pass to General Buckner acting directly under Fleet Admiral Nimitz, when the situation warranted.

The proposed change in "command relationships," made available to him in advance of promulgation, did not please Admiral Spruance, who addressed a memorandum on the subject to the Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas on 27 October 1944. The punch line in this page and a half communication was:

> I believe the most satisfactory command relationship would be the one already used heretofore in the Central Pacific campaign and now generally understood by All Hands.

This memorandum from Admiral Spruance was circulated in the top echelons of the CINCPOA Staff on the 28th, 29th, and 30th of October 1944. It encountered heavy going, indicated by the following note on it from the Plans Officer, the fourth officer down on the routing slip: "Rec'd December Tenth." This was nineteen days after Fleet Admiral Nimitz's order on the "command relationship's" subject had been issued way back on 21 November 1944, contrary to the form desired or recommended by Admiral Spruance.

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS—OKINAWA

Subordinate commands in the Pacific Fleet were directed to undertake their planning for the assault on Okinawa based on the following assumptions:

a. that Iwo Jima had been seized at a sufficiently early date to permit the gun support and air support units to participate in the assault on Okinawa.
b. that we would maintain continuing control of the air in the objective area.
c. that assault shipping and supporting naval forces would have been released from the Luzon operations.[17]

All the assumptions turned out to be reasonably sound, the additional six weeks separating the Okinawa and Iwo Jima operations even permitting most

[17] (a) CINCPAC-CINCPOA-Joint Staff Study Okinawa, 25 Oct. 1944, p. 1; (b) CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Op Plan 14–44, 31 Dec. 1944; (c) CTF 50 Op Plan 1–45, 3 Jan. 1945; (d) CTF 51 Op Plan A1–45, 9 Feb. 1945.

of the ships, damaged by kamikazes in the Luzon operations of General MacArthur, to be repaired and returned to battle duty.

OKINAWA

The Ryukyu Island chain stretches almost 800 miles between the Japanese homeland and Formosa (now called Taiwan). Okinawa, covering 465 square miles, is the only really large island in the Ryukyu Island chain. It is 60 miles long and in the center of the chain which separates the East China Sea from the Central Pacific Ocean Areas.

Okinawa is 750 miles north of Manila, 900 miles north from Leyte Gulf, 1,200 miles northwest from Ulithi, and a long 3,300 miles from Espiritu Santo where the Expeditionary Troop Reserve was to be mounted. The island is located about 350 miles and a bit east of north from Taipei, Formosa and southeast roughly 450 miles from Shanghai.

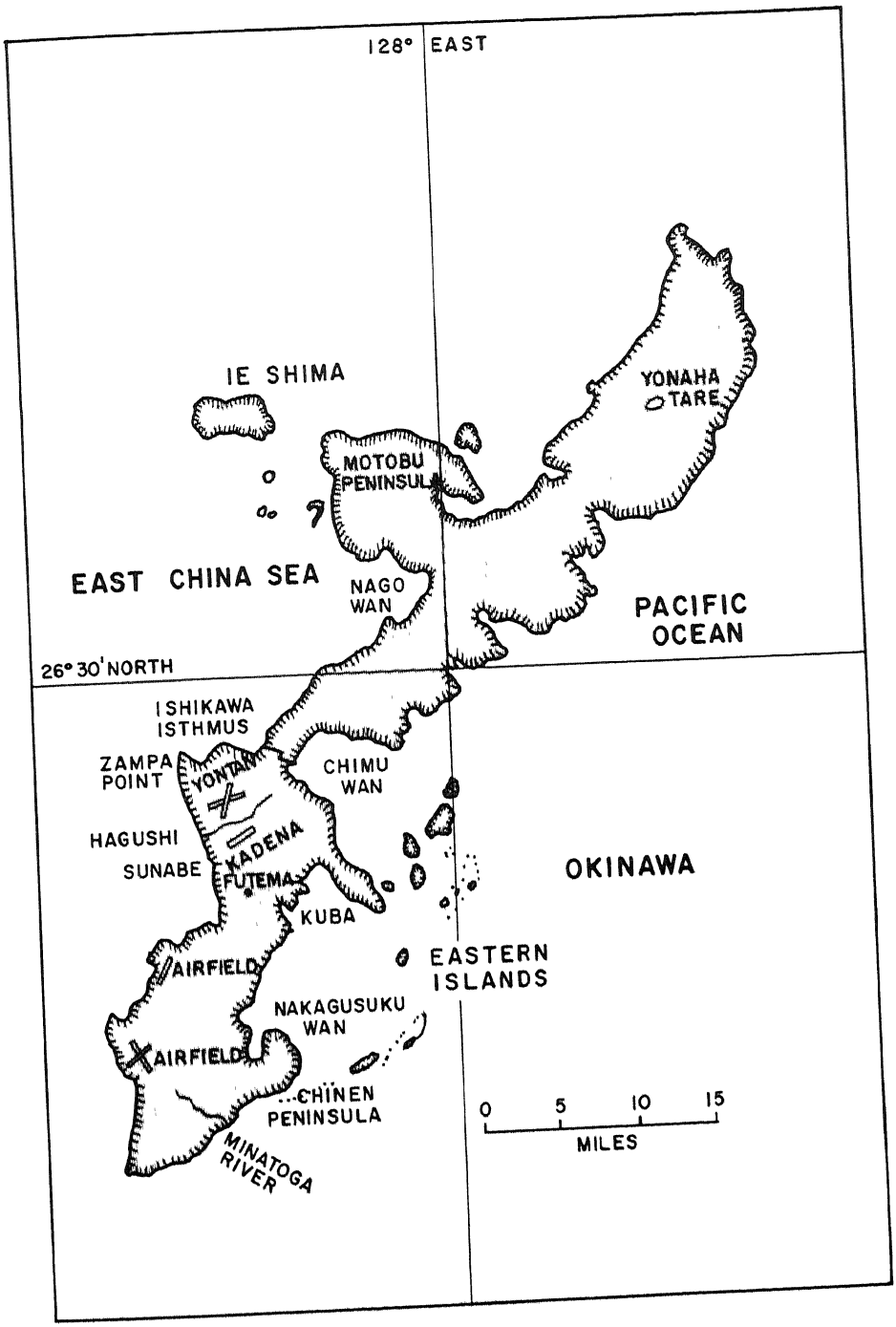
The important fact to be remembered is that Okinawa lay only 350 miles south of airfields on Kyushu, which put it within range of planes available not only on Kyushu but, after refueling, of any of the other home airfields of Japan.

From the viewpoint of our planners, Okinawa and some of the smaller islands in the Ryukyu chain were suitable for the development of large and numerous air bases to support our planned attack on Japan. Additionally, Okinawa provided two suitable Fleet anchorages for our use in invading Japan—that is, suitable in any except typhoon weather.[18]

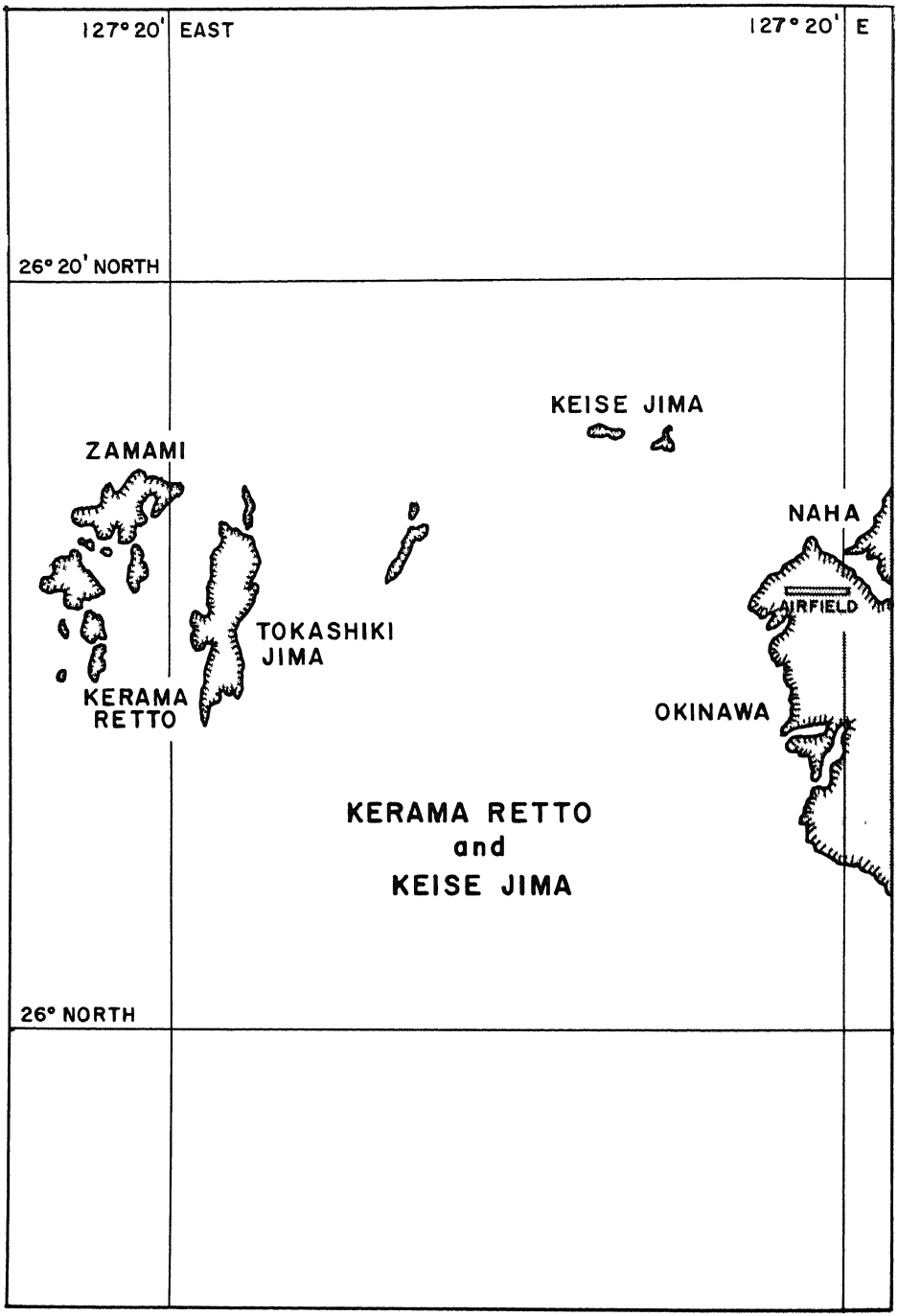
A bit more than one-third of its length northward along the northeast-southwest axis of the 60-mile island, Okinawa narrows to two miles at Ishikawa. Generally speaking, in 1945 three-quarters of the half million population of Okinawa lived south of the Ishikawa Isthmus, and for a good reason. The northern two-thirds of the island was hilly to mountainous, heavily wooded with lush vegetation and marked by a central ridge, from 1,000 feet to 1,650 feet high, and hundreds of ravines. The southern part of the island was favored by rolling lightly wooded country which was well-cultivated. There were steep scarps and ravines in the southern part, but they did not greatly interfere with the cultivation of sugar cane, rice and sweet potatoes, since there was considerable resort to artificial terracing.

Naha, in southwestern Okinawa, with a 1943 population of over 65,000, was the principal city as well as the prefectural capital of the Ryukyus.

[18] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 161–44, Okinawa Gunto, 15 Nov. 1944.


128° EAST
IE SHIMA
YONAHA
TARE
MOTOBU
PENINSULA
EAST CHINA SEA
NAGO
WAN
PACIFIC
OCEAN
26° 30' NORTH
ISHIKAWA
ISTHMUS
ZAMPA
POINT
YONTAN
CHIMU
WAN
HAGUSHI
SUNABE
KADENA
FUTEMA
OKINAWA
KUBA
AIRFIELD
EASTERN
ISLANDS
NAKAGUSUKU
WAN
AIRFIELD
CHINEN
PENINSULA
MINATOGA
RIVER
0 5 10 15
MILES

Okinawa.



Kerama Retto-Okinawa Area.

KERAMA RETTO

Some fifty islands, many just the peaks of submerged mountains, surround Okinawa. An important cluster of ten islands, 17 to 20 miles off Naha in southwestern Okinawa, and called Kerama Retto, provides a large partially sheltered anchorage. The anchorage is protected in good measure from the strong winds blowing in from the north and northeast, which prevail a third of the time during April.

The largest island in Kerama Retto (five by one and a half miles) was Tokashiki Jima, seventeen miles west of Naha. All the islands in Kerama Retto were hilly. The anchorage between the main islands, where the bottom was sand and gravel, was judged to be suitable for twenty 1,000-yard berths and twenty-four 500- to 700-yard berths. It was a suitable location for a floating repair base, and for a large seaplane base.[19]

Additionally, Kerama Retto would prove an anchorage where ammunition ships could be sheltered during the pre-landing gun bombardments to provide the resupply of ammunition for the Gunfire and Covering Force.

WEATHER

Naha, Okinawa, at 26° 11′ North, lies at about the latitude of Palm Beach, Florida (25° 47′ North). If one substitutes destructive typhoons for hurricanes and steps up their frequency and strength, the weather is not too different, except that Okinawa has more and heavier rains, and a higher humidity. For April 1945, seven to eight days of rain were predicted.

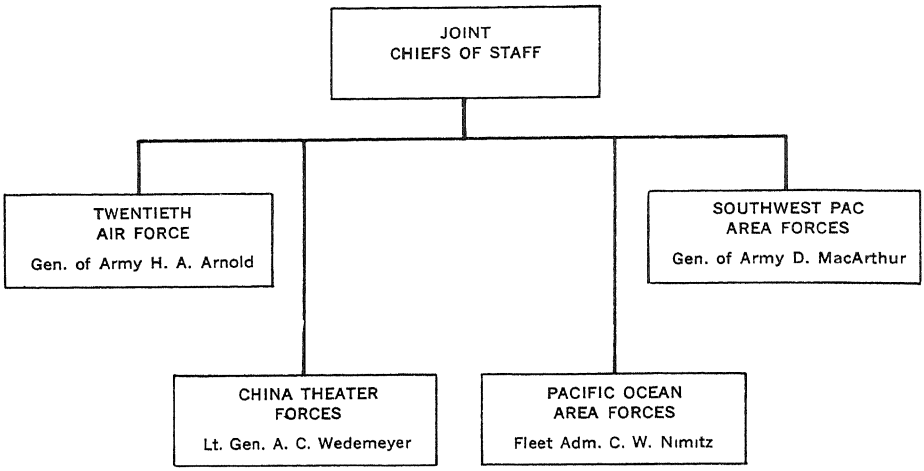
During the April-November period, the mean typhoon path in the Western Pacific lies near the Ryukyu Chain. The frequency per month of typhoons passing through this part of the Pacific Ocean during this period in the past fifty years had averaged:

April 0	July 2	October 2
May 1	August 2	November ..1.5 [20]
June 1	September 2.5	

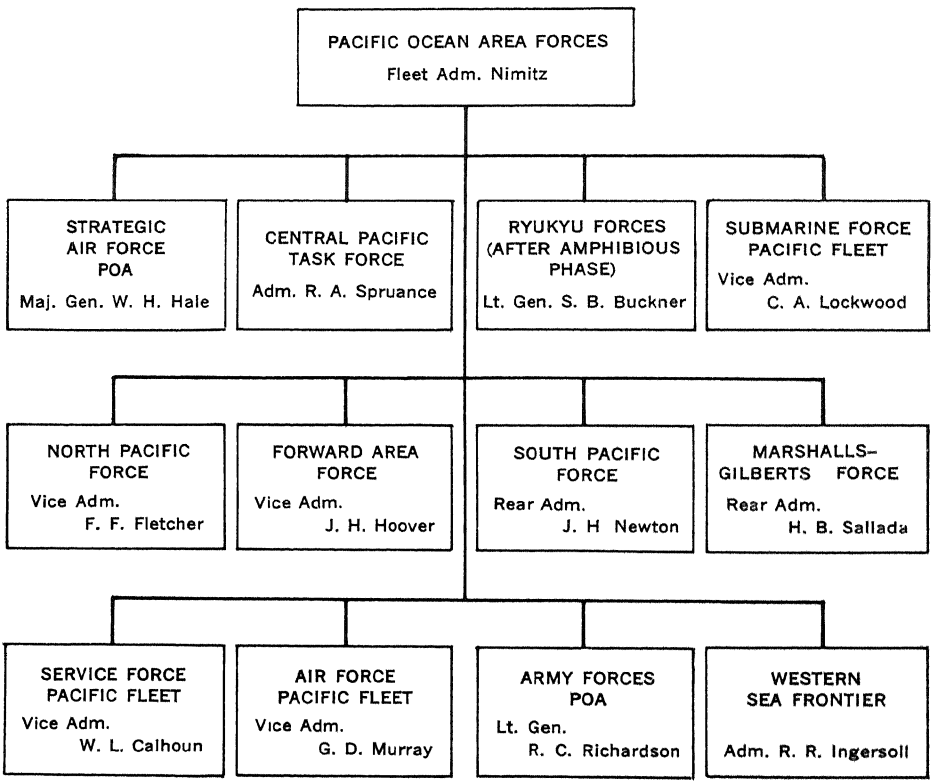
[19] (a) JICPOA Bulletins No. 63–44, *Nansei Shoto,* 15 May 1944, pp. 7, 37. CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 161–44. pp. 56–58; (b) COMFIFTHFLT to COMTHIRDFLT, memorandum, Ser 00121 of 17 May 1945, subj: Transfer of Command; (c) COMPHIBGRP Seven (CTG 51.1) Attack Order A701–45, Ser 0005 of 13 Mar. 1945.

[20] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 161–44, p. 10.

OVERALL COMMAND ORGANIZATION FOR OKINAWA CAMPAIGN



PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS COMMAND ORGANIZATION FOR OKINAWA CAMPAIGN

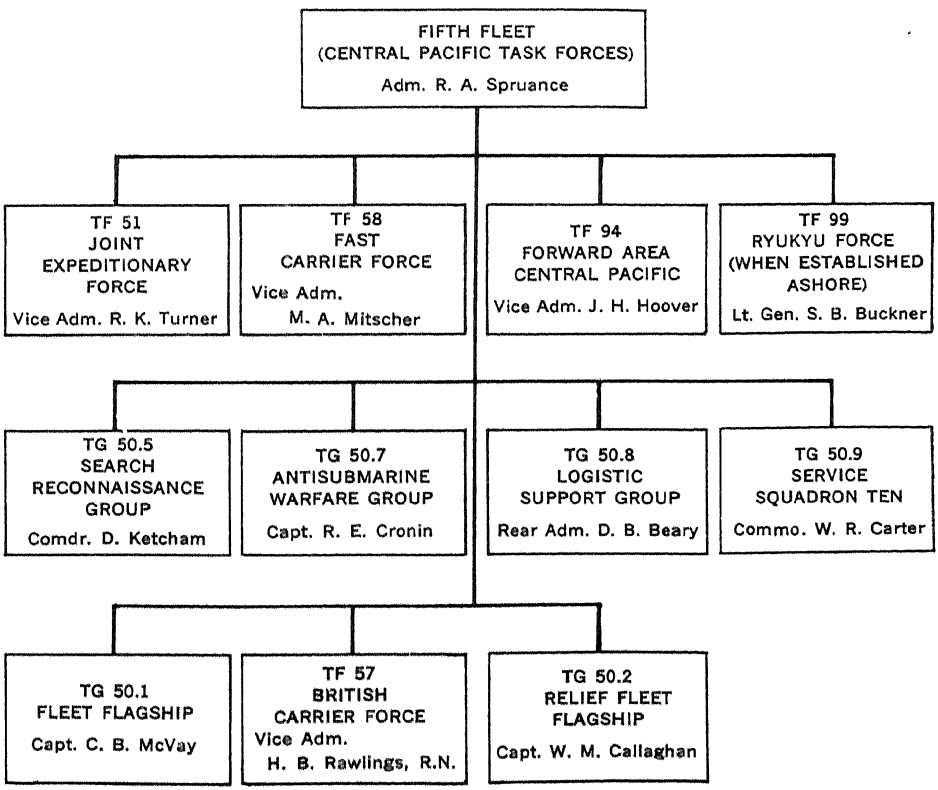


ORGANIZATION—ASSIGNED TASKS

There were an even dozen large task forces of the Pacific Ocean Areas under Fleet Admiral Nimitz involved in the Okinawa campaign. However, the largest and the most directly concerned task forces were the Central Pacific Task Forces under Admiral Spruance. The largest subdivision of these task forces was the Expeditionary Force under Vice Admiral Turner.

There were supporting forces for the main ball carriers within the command limits of Fleet Admiral Nimitz. There were supporting forces for the whole ICEBERG Operation from General MacArthur's command and from the Army Air Forces. These last two supporting commands provided air reconnaissance over the China Sea, the China Coast, the Straits of Formosa, and the sea areas east of Formosa, as well as bombing attacks against enemy installations in northern Formosa, Okinawa, and the Japanese homeland.

FIFTH FLEET COMMAND ORGANIZATION FOR OKINAWA CAMPAIGN



The supporting forces under Admiral Nimitz's command included those with nominal logistic chores such as Western Sea Frontier and the Service Force, Pacific Fleet, and those charged with protecting essential lines of communication such as the Marshalls-Gilberts Force and the Forward Area Force.

The supporting forces with direct combat involvement were the Strategic Air Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas and the Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet. The former provided fighter cover for the 20th Air Force operations against the Japanese homeland and bombed Japanese installations in the Bonins and Japan, and the latter interdicted the sea approaches to Okinawa from Japan and Formosa and provided lifeguard services for our aviators.

The Central Pacific Task Forces was charged with the main task to capture, occupy, and defend Okinawa and to develop air and naval bases thereon. When released from the operational control of Commander Central Pacific Task Forces, the Ryukyu Forces, primarily defensive troops and aircraft, were to defend and develop captured positions in the Ryukyu chain of islands.

CINCPOA retained direct control of the Area Reserve for ICEBERG. This was the 81st Infantry Division, which was on New Caledonia Island in the South Pacific.

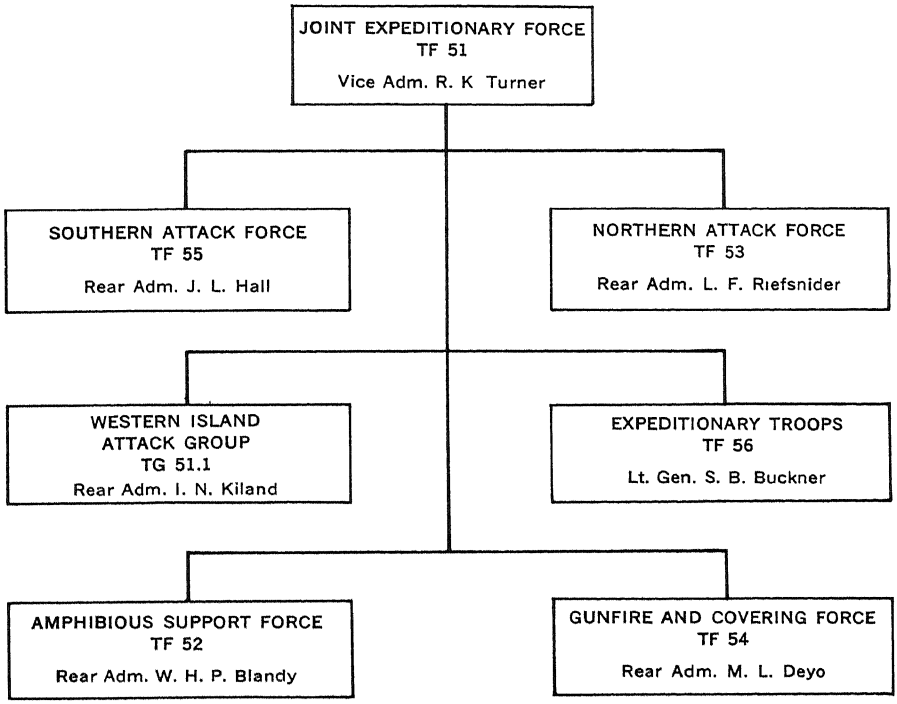
It should be specially noted that Commander Central Pacific Task Forces had as a unit of his command the British Carrier Force, Task Force 57, under the command of Vice Admiral Sir H. Bernard Rawlings of the Royal Navy. The aircraft from the four carriers in this force participated in vigorous bombing attacks, prior to 1 April 1945, against airfields on the island of Miyako about 175 miles southwest of Okinawa and then, in succeeding weeks, continued supporting the main operation by carrying out various attack missions on islands in the area between Okinawa and Formosa.

Other than this valuable additional force, the organization of the Central Pacific Task Forces for ICEBERG was closely patterned after that successfully used for the Iwo Jima operation, as the charts on pages 1070-71 and 1073 show.

JOINT EXPEDITIONARY FORCES AND TASKS ASSIGNED

Lieutenant General Simon B. Buckner, USA, commanded the Joint Expeditionary Troops and the Tenth Army. The Tenth Army was made up primarily of the Marine III Amphibious Corps and the Army XXIV Corps.

TF 51
JOINT EXPEDITIONARY FORCE COMMAND ORGANIZATION
OKINAWA CAMPAIGN



The two major assault task forces of the Joint Expeditionary Force (TF 51) were the Northern Attack Force (TF 53) and Southern Attack Force (TF 55), under the commands of Rear Admiral L. F. Reifsnider (1910) and Rear Admiral J. L. Hall (1913), respectively. The latter was charged with the coordination of both attack force operations.

Rear Admiral Hall was a veteran of five successful amphibious operations in the European Theater, Tunis, Sicily, Italy, Southern France, and Normandy. In all of these, he had greatly distinguished himself.

The III Amphibious Corps consisting of the First and Sixth Marine Divisions from the South Pacific Area and under the command of Major General Roy S. Geiger, USMC, was embarked in the amphibious ships and craft of the Northern Attack Force. The XXIV Army Corps consisting of the Seventh Division and the 96th Division and under the command of Major General J. R. Hodge, USA, similarly was embarked in the amphibious ships and craft of the Southern Attack Force.

For the Iwo Jima operation a new amphibious command was created. It was charged with the coordination and general supervision over all activities at the objective prior to the arrival of the main body of the Joint Expeditionary Force. It was called the Amphibious Support Force.

The skillful blending of diverse pre-landing chores by the Amphibious Support Force at Iwo Jima had drawn praise from All Hands for the concept and the execution. As the planning for ICEBERG largely took place prior to the action at Iwo Jima, it was a bit of a gamble to again provide for an Amphibious Support Force in the organization, but this was done. Other than lengthening out the pre-landing phase of its work from three to eight days, the concept was carried along in the ICEBERG planning.

The mission assigned to the Amphibious Support Force (TF 52) during the period Love minus eight to Love minus one Day, inclusive, was to effect the maximum possible destruction of enemy forces and defenses on Okinawa by surface ship and aircraft bombardment, by minesweeping, and by underwater demolition. Additional tasks included the capture of Kerama Retto and Keise Shima, and the development of a logistics anchorage at the former and the emplacement of artillery on the latter. The task force was composed of heavy fire support ships from the Gunfire and Covering Force (TF 54), carriers and aircraft from the Support Carrier Group (TG 52.1), minesweepers from the Mine Flotilla (TG 52.2), and demolition groups from the Underwater Demolition Flotilla (TG 52.11).

Task Force 52, the Amphibious Support Force, was under the command of Rear Admiral W.H.P. Blandy, who was designated Second-in-Command of the Joint Expeditionary Force at Okinawa, since Rear Admiral Hill was still busy as a bird dog at Iwo Jima. Task Force 52 was of the same general constituency as the Amphibious Support Force for Iwo Jima, except very markedly larger since it included the ships carrying the troops in the Western Island Attack Group (TG 51.1) which was charged with the capture of Kerama Retto and Keise Jima. Rear Admiral I. N. Kiland (1917) who, as a captain, commanded a troop transport in the Guadalcanal operation was in command of TG 51.1.

The Gunfire and Covering Force was under the command of Rear Admiral Morton L. Deyo (1911). It had ten old battleships, including all the battleships which had participated in the pre-landing bombardment of Iwo Jima, plus four of the old battleships initially designated for that task, but kept overly long at work in the Philippines. Additionally the four heavy cruisers under Rear Admiral A. E. Smith (1915) that had labored well at Iwo

Jima, plus four other heavy cruisers and three light cruisers, were assigned to TF 54.

The basic order provided that at 0600 on the day of the main assaults on Okinawa, Love Day, the command of the Amphibious Support Force would pass to Vice Admiral Turner. Rear Admiral Blandy would then be titled "Commander Eastern Fire Support and Attack Group," CTG 51.9, and continue his chores under CTF 51 command.

In an effort to have the ships carrying the Tenth Army Troop Reserve and the Corps Reserve usefully employed in the hours before there was a requirement to land these troops, a Demonstration Group (TG 51.2) was formed and placed under the command of Rear Admiral Jerauld B. Wright (1918). The Second Marine Division was assigned as the Demonstration Force.

The 27th Division of Army Troops constituted the Expeditionary Force, Floating Reserve, Task Group 51.3, which was under the command of Commodore John B. McGovern. Major General George W. Griner, USA, commanded the 27th Division. CTG 51.3 was responsible for either an assault landing on the Eastern Islands off Nakagusuku or Chin Bay, or for the delivery of the embarked troops at some other chosen beachhead.

Commodore Donald W. Loomis (1918) commanded the Area Reserve, which, in far off New Caldonia, mounted the 81st Army Division, Major General Mueller. When made available by CINCPOA, it was to proceed as directed by Vice Admiral Turner (CTF 51).

OVERALL PLAN

The ICEBERG operation was planned to be carried out in three phases. *Phase I* included:

1. the capture of Kerama Retto six days before the main landings on Okinawa and the establishment there of a logistic anchorage and of a floating seaplane base,
2. the capture of four very small islands (Keise Jima) just eight miles west of the Okinawa port of Naha on the day before the main landing, and the emplacement of twenty-four 155-millimeter guns thereon,
3. assault and capture of the southern part of Okinawa—the area lying south of the narrow neck formed by Ishikawa Isthmus, and
4. possibly, the capture of the island Tonachi Jima, lying thirty miles west of the Motobu Peninsula on Okinawa.

Phase II estimated to commence 1 May 1945, included:

1. the capture of the island Ie Shima, lying just west of the Motobu Peninsula, and
2. the capture of Motobu Peninsula.

Phase III the two operations estimated to commence on 1 July 1945, and 1 October 1945, respectively included:

1. the capture of Myako Jima, an island 150 miles to the southwest of Okinawa and
2. the capture of Kikai Jima, an island 170 miles to the north northeast of Okinawa on the way to Kyushu.[21]

The basic order further provided that subsequent to the assault on Okinawa:

> This force will capture, occupy and defend additional positions for establishing secure sea and air control over the East China Sea.

Approximately 116,000 troops were assigned to the initial assaulting units, out of a total of 183,000 troops made available by CINCPOA for the assault phases of the operation.

THE CHOSEN BEACHES

Admiral Spruance's plan had this to say about weather and Okinawa's landing beaches:

> April is the month of greatest weather transition from winter to summer weather. During this month, the prevailing wind shifts into the northeast and decreases considerably. This change makes landings on the western beaches feasible. However, strong north and northwesterly blows will occur during April, and these will seriously affect landings and unloading. . . .[22]

The Hagushi coral sand beaches, preferred for the assault landings, were centered about eleven miles north of the city of Naha on the West Coast of Okinawa. Here 9,000 yards of good to first-rate beaches could be parcelled out into sixteen separate assault landing areas appropriately marked by headlands and cliffs within a seven and a half mile stretch of coast. Individual good landing areas were from 100 to 900 yards wide and the individual beaches were from 10 to 45 yards deep. Most had one road exit. There were no mines in the approaches to the Hagushi beaches.

[21] COMPHIBSPAC Op Plan A1–45, 9 Feb. 1945, pp. 31–33, 34.

[22] COMFIFTHFLT Op Plan 1–45, 3 Jan. 1945, Annex F, Appendix I, para. 6a.

The coral reef off the beaches, however, varied greatly in width, widening to 900 to 1,000 yards off the southernmost beaches designated Brown Three and Four.

As one experienced Squadron Commander reported in regard to the Purple beaches, after he had a look at them:

> A rapid survey of the beaches disclosed that each was fringed with a coral reef extending approximately 300 yards to seaward; dry at low water and covered to a depth varying from 3 to 5 feet at high water. No channels through the reef existed, so that all unloading of small craft had to be done at the reef or to seaward thereof.[23]

Low lying hills in the center of the island overlooked the Hagushi assault beaches, but the Japanese had not undertaken extensive defensive fortification of this hill area.

There were two airfields close by the village of Hagushi, Yontan, a mile to the north, and Kadena, a mile to the southeast.

THE ALTERNATE BEACHES

The alternate assault beaches to be used in case of abnormally strong westerly winds were on the shores of Nakagusuku Bay, on the eastern coast of Okinawa. The demonstration beaches were further south around the Chinen Peninsula on the southeast coast of Okinawa and near the mouth of the small Minatoga River.

The Demonstration Group, Task Group 51.2 (Rear Admiral Jerauld Wright), was to go through most of the motions that would be expected preliminary to and in the making of an actual assault landing at the demonstration beaches. This was to be done both at How Hour on Love Day and again on Love Day plus one.

In case the real alternate assault beaches had to be used for the initial assault landing, the Eastern Islands in Nakagusuku Bay were to be taken first, and then on Love Day plus three or four, the assault landings were to take place on the beaches of Nakagusuku Bay.

JAPANESE DEFENSES—OKINAWA

Commencing on 1 April 1944, two and a half months before we assaulted Saipan, and a long year before we landed on Okinawa, the Japanese started

[23] COMTRANSRON 16, Okinawa Action Report, 30 Apr. 1945, p. 12.

to build up their defenses on Okinawa. They named the 32nd Army to control the defenses of the Ryukyus, and designated Okinawa as its Headquarters. Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima became its capable commander in August 1944, when he relieved Lieutenant General Hasao Watanabe. Major General Isama Cho, the aggressive Chief of Staff, became a lieutenant general in March 1945, at age 51.

Way back in October 1944, CINCPAC had estimated that 48,600 Japanese troops were on Okinawa. By 25 January 1945, CINCPAC's intelligence teams raised this number to 56,000, despite an awareness that one Japanese troop division (actually the veteran Japanese 9th Division with about 14,000 effectives) had departed Okinawa for Formosa in December 1944. Based on recent aerial reconnaissance of convoy arrivals at Naha, Okinawa, this estimate was raised by the XIV Corps to 65,000 on 6 March 1945.

There was no documentary evidence available to CINCPAC prior to the assault landing to corroborate the estimate of 65,000 troop strength, but there had been some very excellent photo reconnaissance. This revealed that the Japanese troops were based largely in the southern half of the island, that there were coast defense guns well emplaced on the high ground south of Naha to defend that port, and that most Japanese troops remained underground during fly overs.

In 1948, the U.S. Army Historical Division estimated Japanese defenders strength on Okinawa at 77,000, of whom 3,500 were naval personnel. In 1955, the Historical Branch of the Marine Corps estimated this strength at 75,000 of whom 8,800 were naval. Both estimates indicated that sizeable numbers of Okinawans, perhaps 5,000, had been integrated into regular Japanese units. Additionally, there were many Okinawans designated Boeitai, who were performing labor chores for the combatant troops.[24]

The Tenth Army, in its operation plan for the ground action on Okinawa, stated that field fortifications for one Japanese regiment existed in the

[24] (a) CINCPAC Joint Staff Study ICEBERG, 5 Oct. 1944. Appendix A, para 1; (b) COMPHIBSPAC Op Plan A1–45, Annex B, para 3; (c) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 53–45, 25 Feb. 1945, p. 14; (d) Tenth Army (TF 56) Op Plan 1–45, 1 Jan. 1945, Annex 3, Sec IV, para 3(b), and Sec V, para 1; (e) XXIV Corps G-3 Journal, Okinawa. FO 46; (f) Roy E. Appleman, *Okinawa: The Last Battle,* Vol. I in subseries *The War in the Pacific* of series UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1948), Appendix B; (g) Charles S. Nichols and Henry I. Shaw, *Okinawa: Victory in the Pacific,* U.S. Marine Corps Monograph (Washington, Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1955), Appendix V.

Hagushi Area, and that the enemy could reasonably be expected to reinforce his Okinawa garrison to 66,000 men by the target date.[25]

The number of airfields on Okinawa in October 1944 was four: Yontan, Kadena, Machinato and Naha. An additional one at Yonabaru on Nakagusuku Bay was underway. But as our air attacks grew more frequent, work on the field under construction was stopped. Just before 1 April 1945, the fields at Yontan and Kadena, both near the Hagushi beaches and the Naha naval airfield just southwest of Naha on the coast had all their airplanes destroyed and became largely non-operational.

Machinato and Naha naval airfields, both near the coast on the East China Sea, and respectively about two miles north and south of Naha, remained heavily defended by ground troops.

THE SCHEME OF MANEUVER—MAIN ASSAULT

During the period when the scheduled date of the assault landing on Okinawa was set for 1 March 1945, Vice Admiral Turner favored landing on its east coast beaches because a more favorable surf and swell would be found there than on the west coast beaches. Over the years, from October into March, winds averaging 17 to 19 miles per hour blew in around Okinawa from the north and west. Gales were frequent.

When on 19 November 1944, because of foreseeable shipping difficulties, the operation had to be delayed until 15 March 1945, Vice Admiral Turner stated that if the operation could be delayed another fifteen days, he would be desirous of making the assault on west coast beaches, because the change of the prevailing winds from north and westerly to south and easterly, normally occurred during the month of March.

The Commanding General, Tenth Army was anxious to land his troops on the west coast (Hagushi) beaches because here were the only beaches extensive enough to permit two corps to land abreast. In addition, two of the principal airfields in Southern Okinawa were immediately back of the assault beaches and could be captured and then used for our own air activities early in Phase One of the operation.[26]

[25] (a) CINCPAC Joint Staff Study ICEBERG, 5 Oct. 1944, Appendix A, para. 1; (b) Tenth Army (TF 56) Op Plan 1-45, Annex, 3, Sec. IV, para. 3(b) and Sec. V, para. 1; (c) COMPHIBSPAC Op Plan A1-45, Annex B, para. 3; (d) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 53-45, p. 14; (e) XXIV Corps, G-2 Summary No. 3, ICEBERG, 6 Mar. 1945.

[26] Tenth Army Report of Operations in the Ryukyus, 3 Sep. 1945, Vol. 1, Ch 3. Pp. 3-0-7 to 3-0-9.

On 7 December 1944, based on appropriate concurrence by All Hands that another 15-day delay could be chanced, the final change was made in the date of the assault landings. They were set for Easter Sunday, 1 April 1945.

The Tenth Army planning staff did not have the benefit of knowing in full the current Japanese "Combat Doctrine for Island Garrison Forces" when it was planning for its conquest of Okinawa. This document was captured during the Okinawa campaign.[27] There were two main courses of action available to the Japanese. They could defend longest and hardest at the beachheads of Okinawa or they could make their main effort back of the beachheads from strong and well prepared natural supporting positions.

The more recent Japanese tactics (at Saipan and at Iwo Jima) employed the second of these alternatives. Their Main Line of Resistance (MLR) had been a position-type defense located at topographically advantageous points which were removed from the beach areas. The Tenth Army correctly opined in its Operation Plan that the Japanese would probably defend the southern one-third of Okinawa

> By garrisoning the several landing areas lightly and holding the bulk of his troops in mobile reserve.

Due to the fact that planning staffs were working on the Okinawa operation at the same time as the Iwo Jima operation, the day of the main assault on Okinawa was titled "Love Day" instead of the usual designation "Dog Day."

As has been indicated previously, 183,000 assault troops were available in the Tenth Army.

PHASE I

The Tenth Army preferred Scheme of Maneuver during all the planning stages, and the one actually in effect when the assault landing took place, was designed to facilitate early seizure of the narrow Ishikawa Isthmus. This isthmus was six miles to the northeast of the East China Sea landing beaches which were both north and south of the small village of Hagushi.

This early seizure of a narrow isthmus was to be accomplished in order to prevent any junction of the Japanese troops known to be positioned both north and south of Ishikawa Isthmus. This isthmus was about two miles

[27] (a) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 147–45. 16 Jun. 1945, 1–27; (b) Tenth Army Op Plan 1–45, Annex 3, G-2 estimate, para 4(a)(1) and 4(a)(2).

wide and four miles long. The Marines were assigned the task of capturing it, and while accomplishing this task, the Marines would overrun Yontan Airfield just to the north of the village of Hagushi.

While the Marines were doing this chore, the XXIV Corps would establish an east-west holding line across Okinawa whose western (right) flank would be anchored about two miles south of the right flank landing beaches. The XXIV Corps would overrun Kadena Airfield in the process.

The three and a half miles east-west holding line assigned to the XXIV Corps was marked by the small towns of Kuba on the east and Futema on the west.

Following the seizure of the Ishikawa Isthmus and the establishment of the XXIV Corps holding line, the capture by the XXIV Corps of the southern part of Okinawa was planned.

To facilitate this plan, the Marines were assigned the landing beaches north of the town of Hagushi and the XXIV Corps of Army troops was assigned the landing beaches to the south. The Marines' objective of Ishikawa Peninsula was to be reached by L plus 15 Day. It was anticipated that the XXIV Corps would reach the objective line Futema-Kuba by L plus 10 Day.[28]

An essential part of Phase I was the capture on Love Day minus six of the off-lying island group of Kerama Retto, to be followed on Love Day minus one by the seizure of Keise Jima, only six miles to the west of Naha. The latter islets were to serve as a site for supporting Army field artillery.

The "foreseen shipping difficulties" mentioned several pages ago arose from the necessity of providing at the Okinawa assault landing, shipping adequate for three Army divisions and for three Marine divisions, as well as for the corps troops of the Marine Third Corps, corps troops of the Army XXIV Corps, and for the Army troops of the Tenth Army. In addition, it was necessary to provide the extensive shipping needed immediately following the assault landing to support the large scale base development plans on Okinawa as well as the enlargement of Japanese airfields ordered to be accomplished during the early tactical phases of the operation.

PHASE II

During Phase II, Ie Shima, just west of Motobu Peninsula, and Motobu

[28] TENTH Army Op Plan 1–45, Section III, para. 10(e) and Annex 2, Operation Maps.

Peninsula, would be captured simultaneously, followed immediately by the capture of northern Okinawa.

As a by-product of the early planning for the slightly overstuffed size of the reinforced divisions for the Iwo Jima and Okinawa assaults, it became necessary to increase the number of transports in each of the transport divisions from three or four transports to five transports and the number of cargo ships from one to two. This change was promulgated by CINCPAC on 12 September 1944.[29]

REHEARSALS

The early and the final drafts of CTF 51's Okinawa Operation Order called for Vice Admiral Turner to leave Iwo Jima "about 1 March" for Guam and Leyte to conduct rehearsals and do last minute planning. His actual departure from Iwo Jima did not occur until 9 March, on which day the rehearsal of the Western Island Attack Group (TG 51.1) commenced in Leyte Gulf. The 9th of March was the last day possible for his flagship to make passage to Leyte if he was to observe the rehearsals of the Southern Attack Force (TF 55), scheduled to begin in the Bincay-Tarraguna Area of Leyte Gulf on 16 March.

The Northern Attack Force (TF 53) under Rear Admiral Reifsnider loaded and embarked its troops way down in the Solomons far from the scrutiny of Vice Admiral Turner. It held its rehearsal in the Cape Esperance area, Guadalcanal from 1 to 7 March 1945.

The rehearsals of the three major assault forces all differed a bit, some being held up by the late arrival of assault LSTs. But, in general, during the early parts of the rehearsals troops were boated, but not landed, while in later parts they were landed. Gunfire and air bombardment support were actual or simulated, depending on the phase of the rehearsal or whether the rehearsals were taking place in inhabited areas. Vice Admiral Turner commented:

> The dispersion of troops and shipping allocated to the Joint Expeditionary Force for the Okinawa Operation, from the Philippines to the West Coast, and in the South Pacific precluded a joint rehearsal of all units.[30]

Poor to bad weather dogged the rehearsals.

[29] PACFLT Confidential Notice 29CN-44 of 12 Sep. 1944.

[30] (a) COMPHIBSPAC (CTF 51) Okinawa Report, 25 Jul. 1945, Vol. I, Part II. para. 1.

> Heavy swells, wind and almost continual rainy conditions caused delays in the schedule of landings. . . .
>
> Considering the complexity of the operation and the relative inexperience of naval personnel involved, the curtailment of these exercises by weather conditions made the training provided entirely inadequate.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Even this modest schedule could not be carried out in its entirety, because of the heavy surf on the beaches.[31]

PLANNING FOR USE OF PT BOATS AT OKINAWA

Before relating the story of the Okinawa assault, the reason for the absence of PT boats in the assault forces will be mentioned.

Vice Admiral Turner, and many other naval officers who had witnessed the PT boat operations in the Guadalcanal and New Georgia operations, thought that the PT boats were anywhere from somewhat to vastly over-rated by the public and the press.

Admiral Hall tells the story that prior to the Okinawa operation the over-all commander of the PT boats, who had participated in the South Pacific operations, reported to him in Leyte for duty in connection with training for the upcoming Okinawa landings. Admiral Hall asked Admiral Turner by despatch what part the PT boats would play in the operations so he could arrange appropriate training for them. Vice Admiral Turner informed Admiral Hall that the PT boats would not even be allowed to enter the Okinawa area until D plus 4 or later. Admiral Hall explained:

> He evidently had no use for them, and I had no use for them. When I was doing my part of the Normandy landing, (Omaha Beach) they were of no use whatsoever.[32]

THE NAVY AT OKINAWA

Maintaining the Navy afloat in the seas around Okinawa was a difficult, bloody and long protracted struggle. The amphibians did their amphibious tasks of assault landing two corps so expeditiously and so well that the fact that these tasks had to be accomplished, if the Tenth Army was to be put

[31] (a) COMPHIBGRP Seven (CTG 51.1) Okinawa Action Report, 25 May 1945, part II, paras 4, 7, pp. 1, 2; (b) COMPHIBGRP 12 (CTF 55) Okinawa Action Report, 31 Jul. 1945, Part II, para 2, p. 1.

[32] Interview with Admiral John Leslie Hall, USN (Ret.), 1–6 Nov. 1961. Hereafter Hall.

on a successful course, largely has been forgotten. The main naval struggle was not between the naval amphibians and unhospitable beaches or between Japanese dug in at the beachhead and on-rushing landing craft, but between U. S. radar picket ships, their supporting small craft, and the fighter aircraft on the one side and the Japanese kamikaze on the other side.

As one commodore stated the case from the viewpoint of the radar picket ship:

> Never in the annals of our glorious naval history have naval forces done so much with so little against such odds for so long a period.[33]

Without in any way indicating a lack of appreciation of this particularly bloody part of the Navy's Okinawa campaign, the amphibious assault landings will be described.

The amphibians expected and prepared for the worst. As Commander Transport Squadron 14 wrote in his Action Report:

> It was assumed that there would be considerable enemy submarine and motor torpedo boat activity as well as strong enemy air attacks against the transport groups. . . . Intelligence indicated that the enemy was prepared to use small suicide boats in attacks against shipping. The reports indicated further that the beaches would be well defended, and photographs disclosed that pill boxes and trenches had been constructed along the beaches and that a fringing reef about 400 yards wide would have to be crossed. . . . It was assumed that the enemy would make a fanatical resistance.[34]

MINESWEEPING

The waters of the East China Sea are mostly less than 100 fathoms deep and hence mineable. Mines also are a favorite weapon of those on the defensive. So it was fully expected that the Japanese would heavily mine the waters around Okinawa. While no surprise, the need for minesweeping was accentuated when the destroyer *Halligan* (DD-584), screening prelanding bombardment units, blew up and sank twelve miles west of Naha on 26 March 1945, when she steamed into an area not yet declared swept.

Over 500 mines were swept up by the Mine Flotilla. Additionally, large numbers of floating mines were sunk by rifle or machine gun fire by the

[33] COMTASKFLOT Five, Okinawa Report, 20 Jul. 1945, p. 14.

[34] COMTRANSRON 14, Okinawa Report, 28 Apr. 1945, p. 7.

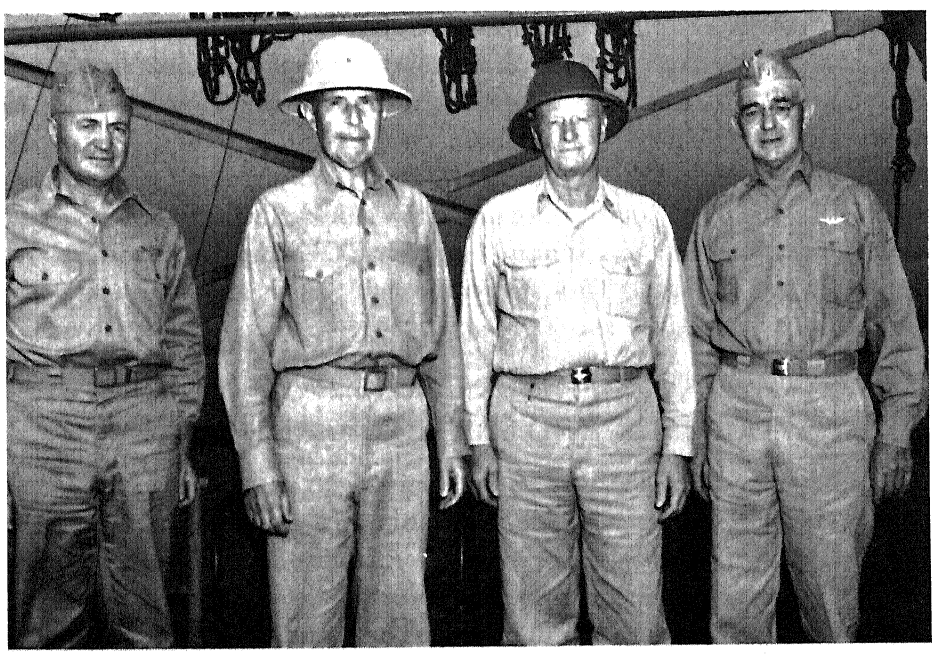
Mine Flotilla as well as by all ships of all types deployed in Okinawan waters.[35]

THE AMPHIBIAN ARMADA BEGINS TO MOVE

The first important amphibious event planned for the Okinawa operation was the assault landings on the various islands of Kerama Retto. This task had been assigned to the Western Island Attack Group, TG 51.1, under Rear Admiral I. N. Kiland.

The Tractor Flotilla, the advance echelon of this Group, was underway for Okinawa from Leyte, Central Philippines, on 19 March 1945. There were 22

[35] (a) COMMINPAC (CTG 32.2), Report of Capture of Okinawa Gunto—Phases One and Two, 23 July 1945; (b) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 208–45, Japanese Minefields 31 August, 1945; (c) Theodore Roscoe, *United States Destroyer Operations in World War II* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1953), p. 469.



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Left to right: Rear Admiral Forrest Sherman (Deputy Chief of Staff to CINCPAC), Admiral Raymond A. Spruance (COMFIFTHFLT), Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz (CINCPAC), and Vice Admiral Kelly Turner (CTF 51) on board USS Eldorado *off Okinawa.*

LSTs, 14 LSMs and 40 LCIs in its advance echelon and 20 transports and cargo ships in the second echelon, departing San Pedro Bay, Leyte, on 21 March 1945. There had been the usual problems before sailing, as this report indicates:

> Loading was from exposed, and, for the most part on underdeveloped beaches. Surf and swell damaged many boats, several beyond repair. In spite of the delayed arrival, inexperienced personnel and unfavorable weather, loading was completed on schedule, with minor exceptions.[36]

A minesweeper unit of the Mine Flotilla, which was a major group in the Amphibious Support Force, had left Ulithi for Okinawa 24 hours after the Tractor Flotilla of the Western Island Attack Group had sailed from Leyte. The rest of the Amphibious Support Force (TF 52), under Rear Admiral Blandy, and the Gunfire and Covering Force (TF 54), under Rear Admiral M. L. Deyo, also were underway from Ulithi for Okinawa on 21 March. The *Eldorado,* flagship of Vice Admiral Turner, sailed from San Pedro Bay, Leyte, on 27 March with the Southern Attack Force. The Northern Attack Force had departed the Guadalcanal Area on 15 March.

The Mine Flotilla had been directed to commence minesweeping off Okinawa on 24 March, and the pre-landing bombardment was scheduled to begin on 25 March 1945.

The Seaplane Base Group (TG 51.20), the Demonstration Tractor Group (TG 51.8), and Transport Unit Charlie (TU 51.2.1), the latter two involved in demonstrations off the southeast beaches of Okinawa on Love Day, rehearsed in the Marianas. They staged through Saipan and were underway for Okinawa between 23 and 27 March 1945.

SURFACE AND AIR BOMBARDMENT

In order to keep the Japanese in doubt as long as possible as to the actual landing beaches, the pre-landing bombardments—surface and air—were planned and carried out to devote major efforts to the destruction of Japanese defenses positioned to oppose either the real landing, or a landing where the amphibious demonstration was to be carried out. Additionally a major effort was devoted to the destruction of weapons threatening our ships and aircraft, particularly any that would interfere with our minesweeping or UDT operations. Accordingly, large areas of Okinawa were left untouched during this period.

[36] COMPHIBGRP Seven, Okinawa Report, 26 May 1945, Part I, para 5, p. 2.

The actual presence of mines slowed the minesweeping, but as the minesweeping proceeded, the surface ship bombardment was carried out closer and closer to the beach, overcoming the poor visibility conditions which made targets difficult to locate. It took four days of firing before gun ranges of the landing were lowered to 8,000 yards and it was not until 29 March that CTF 52 logged:

> Effective bombardment of Okinawa began this date. Ships were able to close the range.[35]

As the Support Carrier Group (Rear Admiral C. T. Durgin) of the Amphibious Support Force moved into the Okinawa area, the number and frequency of our own air attacks increased markedly. Between arrival in the area and Love Day, the planes from the jeep carriers of Task Group 52.1 flew better than 3,000 sorties and attacked every military objective in sight in the areas back of the landing beaches, both at Hagushi and on the southeastern coast of Okinawa.

Indicative of the surface bombardment effort, the Gunfire Support Force (TF 54), Rear Admiral Deyo commanding, prior to the landings, dropped some 27,000 shells, 5-inch or larger, on military targets within range of the ships' guns and did extensive damage to any military targets that were visible to gunners and their air spotters. All seawalls along the beaches were breached. By late on 31 March, CTF 52, Rear Admiral Blandy, was able to report to Commander Expeditionary Force:

> The preparation was sufficient for a successful landing.[36]

And it was. Rear Admiral Blandy and his many skillful supporting juniors had put together under very trying circumstances a first rate shooting, bombing, minesweeping, and demolition effort. They had overcome misty weather, excellent camouflage, and difficult terrain and absorbed attacks by Japanese submarines, suicide boats and suicide planes. They had done a professional job, one of which they could be very proud.

KERAMA RETTO ASSAULT LANDINGS

The divisional assault landings on Kerama Retto involved approximately

[35] COMPHIBGRP One (Commander Amphibious Support Force CTF-52) Okinawa Report, 1 May 1945, Part V, Sec. C, para D.

[36] CTF 52 Okinawa Report, 1 May 1945, Part V, Sec. C, para. 13(c). See also Sec. E. para III; CTG 52.11, Action Report, 4 Apr. 1945, Okinawa Annexes (j) and (k); CINCPOA Advance Headquarters, 310518 Mar. 1945.

the same basic troop strength (one division) as our initial Guadalcanal landing, where our amphibious campaign in the Pacific had started less than three years before.

Kerama Retto was a complicated amphibious assault since it required initial assault landings on eight small beaches on four different islands, and subsequent assault landings on three additional islands. Before Kerama Retto was secured, altogether fifteen separate assault landings had been made, including five shore-to-shore landings. The Commander of the assault reported:

> In spite of narrow beaches, with bad approaches, and rugged and difficult terrain, all landings were quickly established against light opposition, and control of the islands was gained rapidly and on schedule.[37]

Fueling and ammunition replenishment in the Kerama Retto was started on 28 March. The first seaplanes arrived and began operation from the seaplane base on 29 March 1945. Use of salvage and repair facilities commenced when the *Kimberly* (DD-521) was given emergency repairs on 26 March 1945, and calls for help steadily increased thereafter.

The anchorage was afflicted with ground swells, but otherwise near perfect. The trouble resulting from the swells was summarized by this report:

> Brazos reported ground swells in anchorage were causing excessive damage to destroyers and tankers. Fenders were being carried away at a high rate.[38]

Field artillery and anti-aircraft guns were landed on Keise Shima on 31 March (Love Day minus one).

An immediate unexpected benefit from the Kerama Retto assault was the capture or destruction of more than 350 Japanese "suicide" boats largely hidden away in caves in the various islands.

These small 18-foot, plywood speedboats, powered by a Chevrolet automobile engine, and carrying two 250-pound depth charges on a rack behind the one-man crew, the steersman, were designed to damage amphibious ships and craft in their tender underbellies. Considerable effort was expended on them by the Japanese and great results anticipated. Actually, only three sucessful attacks were made on our naval forces during the months ahead by Japanese suicide boats and these were by boats based in the Naha area. Five craft of LCI Flotilla 21, as late as 3–4 May 1945, located and sank eleven of these Japanese suicide craft in a spirited action which prevented a

[37] *Ibid.*, Part 1, para 8.
[38] *Ibid.*, Part III, p. 50.

further attack on the unloaded cargo ships at this late date in the Okinawa campaign.[39]

THE HAGUSHI ASSAULT LANDINGS

While the seaplane anchorage was being established in Kerama Retto and the repair basin anchorage buoys laid out and occupied, the Underwater Demolition Teams accomplished their difficult and dangerous tasks off the Hagushi beaches on Okinawa with a minimum of real interference from the Japanese, and a maximum of gunfire support from the Gunfire and Covering Force (TF 54).

A reported 2,900 wooden post obstructions off the beaches were located, and on 30 and 31 March, largely destroyed by the UDT. The UDT reports in regards to the beaches were quite favorable.

Stormy waters slowed the amphibians of the main assault force enroute to Okinawa.

> The weather throughout the cruise from Leyte Gulf to the objective was poor with the exception of the day prior to our arrival. Visibility was only fair, the skies were always overcast, rain squalls were frequent; the seas were unusually rough causing the ship to labor when headed into the seas; winds were North by Northeast and about forces 5 to 6. The best that could be said about this kind of weather was, that it did serve to screen our movements. . . .[40]
>
> * * * * *
>
> . . . Progress was delayed by bad weather and at one time it [Southern Tractor Flotilla] was nearly twelve hours behind schedule. By cutting corners and running at maximum possible sustained speed, the Tractor Flotilla made up its lost time and arrived in the Transport Area in time to launch the assault on schedule.[41]

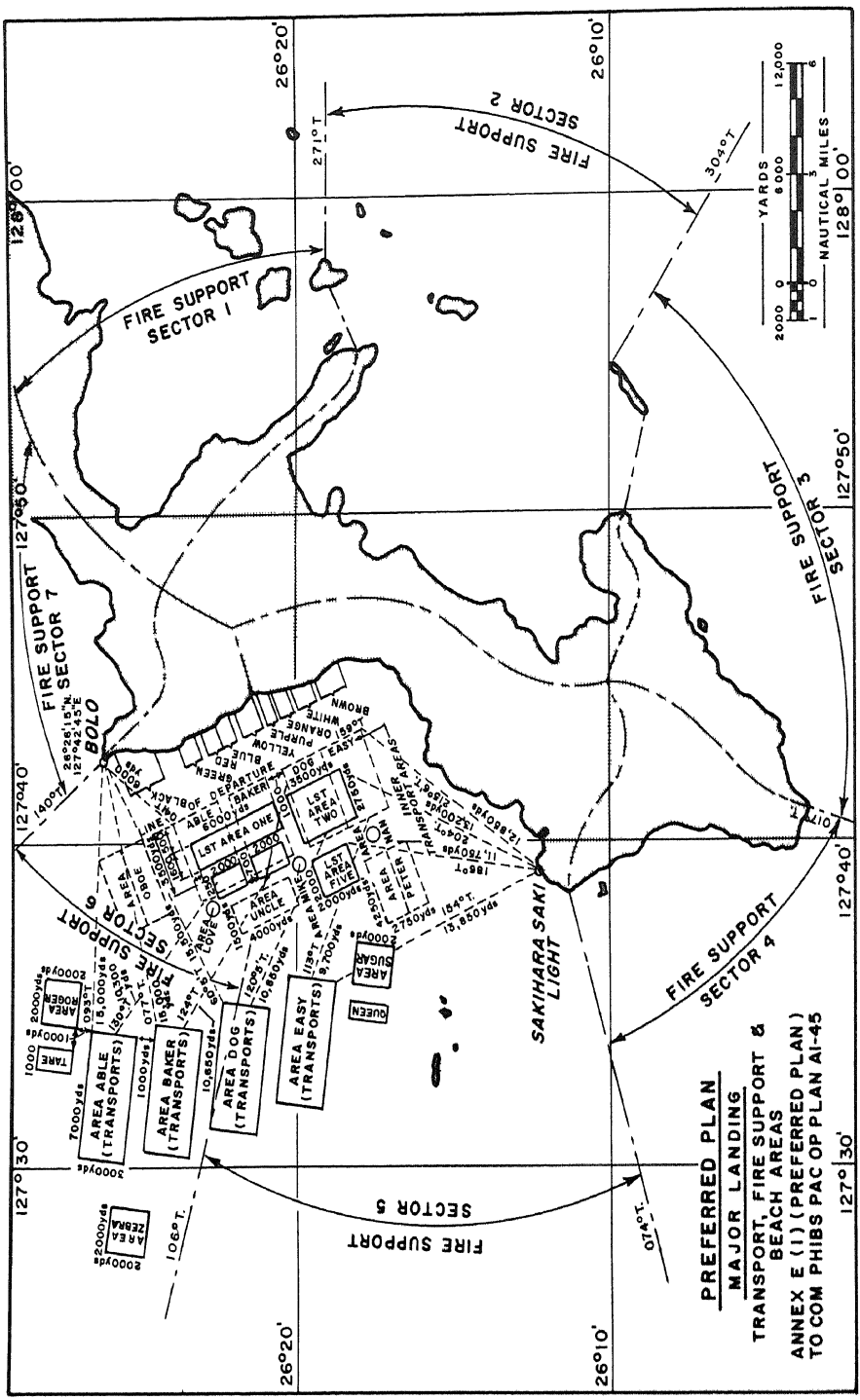
In the days before Loran, during the disagreeable rainy weather:

> Navigation was uncertain because of the almost continuous overcast during the entire voyage and the positions of both Task Force Fifty-Five and other Task Forces converging into the approach channel were not exactly known. This resulted in a very hectic evening and night preceding Love Day, but after considerable scrambling, the leading convoy began the last leg of the

[39] *Ibid.*, (a) Part 1, Sec C, para 3; (b) Part IV, Sec A and Photographic Supplement showing boats, boat caves, etc; (c) CTU 52.9.7 Okinawa Action Report, 4 May 1945.

[40] CO LCI (M)-757 Okinawa Report, 10 Apr. 1945, p. 11.

[41] COMPHIBGRP 12 Okinawa Report, 31 Jul. 1945, Part II, Sec. (B), pp. 1–2.



Hagushi assault landing, Okinawa.

approach exactly on time, and arrived in the Transport area precisely as planned.[42]

* * * * *

Weather and surf conditions were generally favorable for landing craft operations except April 4th and 5th.[43]

And so, on Easter morning, 1945, the amphibians approaching Okinawa were battling poor visibility due to an after-storm haze. As Commander LST Flotilla Three reported it:

At sunrise 1 April 1945, visibility was only fair. This degree of visibility continued throughout the approach of this unit. It was difficult to make out navigational aids on Okinawa due to low hanging clouds and mist. . . .[44]

Sunrise was at 0621. Morning twilight had begun at 0503, but because of Japanese air attacks on the assembling armada, the ships had been "making smoke" steadily from 0515 until 0552, which didn't improve the overall visibility.

It is only fair to report that when the Army recorder had reveille, he saw the day a bit differently. According to the Army boss man, General Buckner, the day

dawned with cloudy to clear skies, moderate east to northeast winds, negligible surf, and a temperature of 75°.[45]

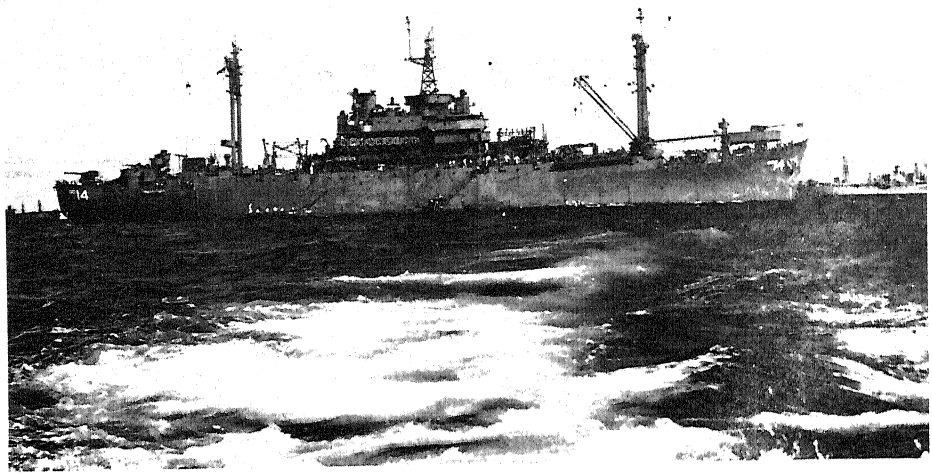
THE PLACE OF GREATEST DANGER BELONGS TO ME

Admiral Hall told me:

On April 1, 1945, in the *Teton*, as Commander Southern Attack Force, I was headed into the Transport Area at Okinawa, and my Flag Captain was about to anchor. Just at this time the *Eldorado* flying Admiral Turner's flag, came up from astern and steamed right through an area where some Japanese shore batteries were dropping their splashes and on in close to the beach. I told the skipper of the *Teton* that if he let Admiral Turner get any closer to the enemy than I was, I would relieve him. So he steamed in closer to the beach than the *Eldorado* and anchored.[46]

Despite the smoky haze, and the difficulty of making out navigational

[42] *Ibid.*, Sec. (B), p. 2.
[43] COMPHIBSPAC Okinawa Gunto Report, 25 Jul. 1945, Part II, p. 16.
[44] COMLSTFLOT Three Action Report, Part III, para. A, p. 1.
[45] Commanding General Tenth Army, Operations in Ryukyus Campaign, 3 Sep. 1945, Vol. I, p. 7–III–1.
[46] Hall.



80-G-361892

USS Teton (*AGC–14*), *flagship of Rear Admiral J. L. Hall in the Okinawa Operation.*

aids, the troop carriers of the two main assault forces commenced disembarking their amphibious troops on 1 April in the correct Transport Areas and on time.

NEARLY EVERYBODY IS NEEDED

The Demonstration Group, TG 51.2, demonstrated not only once but twice off the southeast beaches and then landed the troops of the Tenth Army Reserve who, together with the Second Marine Division, were aboard the demonstrating transports, over the Hagushi beaches on Love Day plus one. The Marine Second Division, Major General T. E. Watson, USMC, in these same demonstrating transports did not get ashore in the Ryukyus as a division. On 3 June 1945 Regimental Combat Team Eight initiated the capture of four undefended outlying islands where long-range radar and fighter directory facilities were established.

In due time, the Expeditionary Force Floating Reserve, TG 51.3, Commodore John B. McGovern, Commander, which lifted the 27th Infantry,

Major General George W. Griner, AUS, was called forward from Ulithi where it had been staged from Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides. One battalion from one regiment of the 27th captured the Eastern Islands off Chimu Wan and Nakagusuku Wan, commencing 10 April. The rest of the 27th Division landed over the Hagushi beaches and joined the XIV Corps.

The troops (77th Infantry, Major General Andrew D. Bruce), who had so successfully captured Kerama Retto, assaulted Ie Shima off the Motobu Peninsula on Love Day plus fifteen and captured that island five days later. This operation, initially planned for Phase II, became an imperative during early April 1945, in order to provide timely radar warnings as well as a base for fighter aircraft further north from the landing beaches, to combat kamikaze attacks on the Transport Areas.

All the assigned troops got into the operation except those in the designated Area Reserve, Commodore D. W. Loomis (CTG 51.4), and the 81st Infantry, Major General Paul Mueller, AUS. This Task Group remained on call at Noumea, New Caledonia, throughout the operation.

HOW HOUR—1 APRIL 1945

The lead LVT waves from the two amphibious corps, each of which initially landed two of its three divisions abreast on their designated Hagushi beaches (within the best four miles of the Hagushi coastal landing area) met their landing hour of 0830 or were late by a few minutes. The latest Lead Wave landing hit Blue Two at 0842.

This was accomplished despite the long period spent in transferring troops from transports to LSTs, then to amphibious tractors or amphibious tanks. These transfers were necessary since:

> During the planning phase of the operation, the coral reef presented a problem in that there was no way of ascertaining definitely the depth of water over the reef. Therefore it was assumed that landing craft would not be able to traverse it, and that it would be necessary to transfer support troops and cargo at the line of traffic control, beyond the reef. . . . However, it was found that the reef was not as great an obstacle as had been anticipated. It was possible to discharge cargo onto the dry reef at low tide and pontoon barges were used to transfer cargo from landing boats to LVTs and DUKWs.[47]

The assault landing parts of the operation went marvelously well.

[47] COMTRANSRON 14 Okinawa Report, 24 Jan. 1945, p. 8.

AN IMPRESSIVE SPECTACLE

One observer caught the drama of the landing in these words:

> The approaching landing waves possessed something of the color and pageantry of medieval warfare, advancing relentlessly with their banners flying. In the calm sunlight of the morning, it was indeed an impressive spectacle.[48]

However, there were and continued to be problems for the seaman.

The Japanese did not seriously oppose the assault landing at the beachheads. The Marines had captured Yontan Airfield by 1116 on the morning of 1 April 1945, and the Army troops had overrun Kadena Airfield by 1240 that same day. At the first of these airfields

> The enemy plan of destroying the Yontan airfield was not carried out because the units charged with that responsibility were dissipated by our air attacks.[49]

By the end of the day the front lines were 4,000–5,000 yards from the assault beachhead along an eight-mile front. It was a day of major accomplishments by the amphibians. As Admiral Spruance reported in his Action Report:

> Naturally, all attack commands were highly elated with this unexpected situation. The fierce fighting and heavy casualties considered unavoidable in taking this area had not materialized due to the sudden withdrawal of the unpredictable Jap.

By 1600, 50,000 troops were ashore. Unloading of cargo promptly followed the troop disembarkation, and:

> Ground action in general was characterized by weak opposition to landings. The enlargement of the beachhead on Okinawa initially was rapid. Movement to the north was relatively fast against scattered resistance. . . .[50]

Before dark the next day, the XXIV Corps had reached the eastern coast of Okinawa and the Marines were well on their way to the Ishikawa Isthmus which they occupied on April 3rd. As Ishikawa Isthmus had been a Love Day plus ten objective in Lieutenant General Buckner's plan, it is abundantly clear that the Marines moved both with their accustomed speed and against light opposition.

Several weather fronts carrying high winds, moderate swells and choppy seas, caused logistical problems and other worries for the young seaman. One account stated:

[48] CTF 54 Okinawa Report, 5 May 1945, p. 29.
[49] COMGENSIXTHMARDIV, Okinawa Action Report, 15 Jun. 1945, Vol. 2.
[50] COMPHIBSPAC Okinawa Gunto Report, 25 Jul. 1945, Vol. I, Part I, p. 2.

> The worst of these [frontal passages] occurred on L plus 4 day and resulted in serious damage to 12 LSTs and the loss of one LSM, three pontoon barges and a number of small landing boats. The loss of these last was due principally to the fact that they were hastily turned over to the boat pool by transports departing the following day and there was no shelter available for them.[51]

Everyone who was at the assault landings on Okinawa, in talking to this scribe about the campaign, recalled this frontal passage on 4 April 1945 along the following lines.

The weather deteriorated. The wind shifted to the north, its velocity increased to 20 knots, and then to 27 knots and finally to 35 knots, causing a very choppy sea with confused swells. Entries from various records made at the time tell the highlights of the amphibians' problems.

> 1308. CTF 51 directed special precautions be taken to prevent damage due to increasing wind and seas. . . .
>
> 1320. CTF 51 directed that all ships and craft clear beach until weather abated, special precautions be taken to secure barges and causeways, and that boats not urgently required be hoisted in.[52]

Despite this effort to clear the beaches:

> 2300. Reef punctured holes in ballast tanks and engine room of LST-756. Main engine room, forward bilge, control room badly holed and completely flooded. . . . Skin of ship punctured and bulkhead buckling in various places.
>
> 2325. LST-675 attempting to retract from beach, struck an uncharted pinnacle. Main engine flooded. Secured all power. Lines caught in propeller LST-675 broached and caused LSM-121 to broach. LSM-121 reported slowly breaking up. LST-756 reported engine room side giving way.
>
> . . . Pumping unsuccessfully. . . . All power lost on engines and generators.[53]

The strong wind and rough water on the 5th and 6th of April required that:

> All activities on the beach cease and no boats were unloaded from noon 5 April to the morning of the 7th.[54]

Twenty-one landing ships and craft were damaged in varying degrees from

[51] COMPHIBGRP 12 Okinawa Report, 31 Jul. 1945, Part V, Sec B, p. 2.

[52] *Ibid.*, Part III, p. 10.

[53] Extracts from the following reports were combined: COMPHIBSPAC Okinawa Report, Part III, pp. 10–11; COMLSTFLOT Three Action Report, Part III, p. 6; LST-675 Damage Report, 5 Apr. 1945; LST-756 Damage Report, 2 May 1945, and CTG 55.2 Action Report, 28 Apr. 1945.

[54] *Capricornus* Action Report, 13 Apr. 1945, p. 6.

broaching, grounding, or colliding after dragging anchor during this blow up.

Except for 4 and 5 April, weather and surf conditions were generally favorable for landing craft operations during the first six weeks of the Okinawa assault landing.

By 13 April 1945, the Marines had reached Hedo Point at the northern tip of Okinawa and by the 18th they reduced resistance in northern Okinawa to remnant groups.

By 24 April, the Marine III Corps had been alerted that they would be moved back southward.

By 1 May 1945, the III Corps of Marines, together with the Army's XXIV Corps and additional supporting troops, settled down for the long costly struggle to capture Japanese defensive positions in southern Okinawa.

THE JAPANESE FACE THE INEVITABLE

One Japanese diary ended with entries as follows:

> 15 April. . . . The Philippines have fallen, Roosevelt is dead, and our Combined Fleet has come out and attacked, it appears.
>
> 16 April. . . . Corporal Kuroiwan has been made platoon commander, and I [a Superior Private] have become leader of the 2nd Squad.
>
> 17 April. . . . Our platoon will defend this ground to the death. Enemy vessels are lined up directly before us.[55]

THE LOGISTIC SUPPORT

The general cargo unloading proceeded rapidly during the good weather of the first few days after the assault landings despite an inability of the Shore Party to unload boats as rapidly as they arrived at the beach. The kamikazes ensured the rapidity with which all the amphibians unloaded their ships and craft. But this is not to say that there were no problems for the amphibians in unloading during the 81 days which elapsed before the island was captured and a secure base established for the final assault on the homeland of Japan.

As CTF 55 reported in his Okinawa Action Report:

[55] CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 147-15, Translations Interrogation No. 32, 16 Jun. 1945, Item No. B-16, 054A, p. 53.

The unloading was slowed down, however, by the unfavorable nature of the beaches, particularly WHITE and BROWN beaches, over which Transport Squadron Fourteen was discharging and by the inability of the Shore Party to unload the landing craft as fast as they could be loaded from the ships and sent to the beach.[56]

Or as another seasoned observer remarked:

Enemy air raids and choppy seas slowed unloading operations at times.[57]

In general, during the landing of reinforcements:

All troops were landed dry. . . .

Unloading operations were hampered during the first three days by rough weather. Nevertheless it was found possible to land boats loaded with vehicles on the beach. . . .

By the end of the third day, pontoon causeways were adjusted and cranes were set up at the seaward end so that boats with net loaded cargo were unloaded from half tide to high water. . . .[58]

* * * * *

LSM were landed at the reef's edge of both beaches at high tide and unloaded into trucks at low water; into LVTs or DUKWs at high water. . . . Small craft with vehicles were unloaded at the reef's edge with the assistance of bulldozers and tractors at both beaches during the lower half of the tide cycle. . . .[59]

* * * * *

The unloading of general cargo was more complicated. General cargo was taken from the ship via LCVPs or LCMs to the reef where it was transferred to pontoon barges and reloaded into LVTs and DUKWs for the beach. The necessity of handling general cargo three times before it reached the beach increased appreciably the time consumed unloading. . . . This ship at one time had boats in the water eighteen hours waiting to be unloaded.[60]

* * * * *

The reef on PURPLE TWO extended out 300 yards, 85% of which was dry at low tide. During this stage LCMs and LCV(P)s came into inlets (natural and some blasted) where vehicles could be driven off under their own power. Cranes were used to unload cargo into trucks. During high tide (tidal range 5.8 ft) a crane on the causeway was used to unload into DUKWs and LVTs and trucks could be backed onto the causeway for receiving loads from ships' boats. . . .[61]

* * * * *

[56] COMPHIBSPAC, Okinawa Report, 31 Jul. 1945, Part II, p. 3.
[57] COMLSTGRP 85, CTU 55.3.8, Okinawa Report, Part I, para 6. Part III, p. 4.
[58] COMTRANSRON 16 Okinawa Report, Phase I, 30 Apr. 1945, p. 11.
[59] COMTRANSRON 16 Okinawa Report, Part VI, p. 13.
[60] *USS Cecil* (APA-96) Okinawa Operation Report, 17 May 1945, Encl. (A), para. 4.
[61] *USS Deuel* (APA-160) Okinawa Report, 26 Apr. 1945, p. 5.

> The boats rendezvoused off pontoon causeways where LSMs were moored. Because of ebbing tide, the troops went aboard the two LSMs over cargo nets, then descended from the ramps onto previously erected pontoon causeways, to the beach. . . .[62]

Altogether, during the 81 days of the operation, a dozen LSTs had major hull damage and many, many smaller ships, and particularly landing craft, found the pounding surf and whistling winds greater than their seaman's skill. As one Commanding Officer reported:

> Coxswains of boats do their best but lack of heavy (up to 6") lines make it impossible to keep boats on station. Light lines (4"–5") part in seaway, or cleats pull out of boats.[63]

> Landing craft of all types and pontoon barges suffered considerable damage from the landing on fringing coral reef, which covered the entire shore line in the landing area.[64]

It might be added that low stages of the tide made unloading difficult on the first day and that no landing craft could get over the outer reef even at high tide, until the Underwater Demolition Teams had blasted passages through the reefs.

The hurry to be the first away from the dreaded kamikazes also created problems, as one AKA report shows:

> Secondly, there was a lack of two-fisted control on reef or beach in the White area particularly after departure of COMTRANSRON 14 and staff. The young officer left in charge on the reef was apparently inexperienced and the result was senseless and undignified bickering among the various APA and AKA officers, each anxious to get his ship out of the area ahead of the others.[65]

That the beaches were considerably less than perfect was recounted by LSM-220 in its Okinawa Action Report, covering 1 April 1945:

> 1050. Grounded out lightly on coral fringing reef with about eight feet of water off the bow between the coral ridges and heads. [Blue Beach]
> 1105. Retracted as water too deep to disembark the tanks.
> 1115. Grounded out in a different spot, but still too deep.
> 1120. Retracted from the reef. Proceeded to reef at Blue Beach II.
> 1145. Attempted landing on Blue II.
> 1200. Retracted from reef still unable to get in close enough to allow tanks to disembark. No enemy fire during these operations.

[62] *USS Darke* (APA-159) Okinawa Report, 21 Apr. 1945, Encl. (A), p. 7.
[63] *USS Burleson* (APA-67) Action Report, 7 Apr. 1945, p. 2.
[64] COMPHIBGRP 12 Okinawa Report, Part II, Sec. (c), p. 3.
[65] *USS Capricornus* (AKA-57) Action Report, 13 Apr. 1945, p. 4.

1536. Following beachmaster in LCVT PA200–13 to Beach Yellow II to attempt to land tanks.

1545. Grounded out on reef at speed 6 so as not to puncture hull on jagged coral heads and ridges.

1546. First tank off. . . .[66]

LSM-84 in its Action Report, also voiced the general complaint of the smaller amphibious ship:

> Much difficulty was experienced in unloading vehicles. We beached on Yellow Two at 1820 1 April and prepared to disembark at next low tide. At 0153 disembarked bulldozer successfully with intention of towing cranes ashore with it. However, ramp inclination was very steep so that although there was only 1′ 10″ of water, the protruding engines on the cranes went completely to the bottom and drowned out. . . . We waited for the next flood tide and then beached at three (3) other points seeking a better position. At each beaching, the ramp when completely dropped was one to two feet above the bottom and inclination too steep for cranes. Damaged starboard screw.[67]

A Group Commander of LSTs reported:

> Discharge of cargo over the reefs surrounding Okinawa was difficult, and was hampered by unfavorable weather conditions during the first eleven days of the operation. Commanding Officers were often confused by conflicting orders to beach or retract as the shore authorities apparently did not trouble to clear such requests with naval authorities. On several occasions, it was found that shore authorities were alloting priorities for unloading to ships that had actually sailed.
>
> Reefs in the entire area had long fingers and numerous heads which presented grave problems in beaching. . . .
>
> . . . the reefs were of such structure as to prohibit even small craft (LCVPs and LCMs) from gaining access to dry land. . . .[68]

SUBMARINES AND MIDGET SUBMARINES

As one transport reported:

> There was never a dull moment during the sojourn at Okinawa. Throughout the day and night, attacks were very frequent and of various types. Midget submarines were sighted floating booby traps and makeshift destruc-

[66] LST-220 Action Report, 9 Apr. 1945, p. 6.
[67] LSM-84 Action Report, 22 Apr. 1945, p. 3.
[68] COMLSTGRP 63, Okinawa Report, 15 Apr. 1945, pp. 3, 4.

> tive charges, small suicide boats and parties of enemy swimmers were reported to be in the area. . . .[69]

Japanese submarines, for the first time in the Central Pacific campaign, operated aggressively and in strength against the task forces in the vicinity of Okinawa. Due to depth of water, the large Japanese submarines generally operated to the eastward of Okinawa. Four Japanese submarines were logged by the Japanese as being lost in this effort during operations near Okinawa in April 1945, and four more in May.[70] Japanese midget submarines had little luck. Twenty-one midget submarine pens, containing six wrecked submarines and one eighteen-inch torpedo, were discovered by the Marines in the Motobu Peninsula. Only one midget submarine firing a torpedo was definitely sighted by our forces in the Okinawa area, but numerous others were destroyed and prevented from reaching firing positions.

On Love Day plus four, a midget submarine took a pot shot at the *USS Catron* (APA-71), but the torpedo missed and exploded on the reef. Other than this, the Japanese submarines were largely unable to get inside the anti-submarine screen around the transport areas.[71]

GOOD GUESS

One of the assumptions in Admiral Spruance's Operations Plan issued way back in January 1945, had been:

> That the operation will cause violent enemy air reaction from his air bases in Japan proper, China, Nansei Shoto (Ryukyu Chain), Formosa, and from carriers.

This assumption turned out to be all too correct.

THE AMPHIBIANS AND THE KAMIKAZE

An actual indication of things to come occurred during the first day's pre-landing shore bombardment of Okinawa by the Gunfire and Covering Force, days before the troops were to be assault-landed. A destroyer, a light mine-layer, and a high speed transport, all in the Amphibious Force, were each hit by Japanese suicide planes on this day, Sunday, 25 March 1945. This weapon,

[69] *USS Joseph T. Dickman* (APA-13) Action Report, 27 Apr. 1945, p. 4.

[70] Military History Section, Far East Command, *The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II*, February 1952, pp. 227, 229.

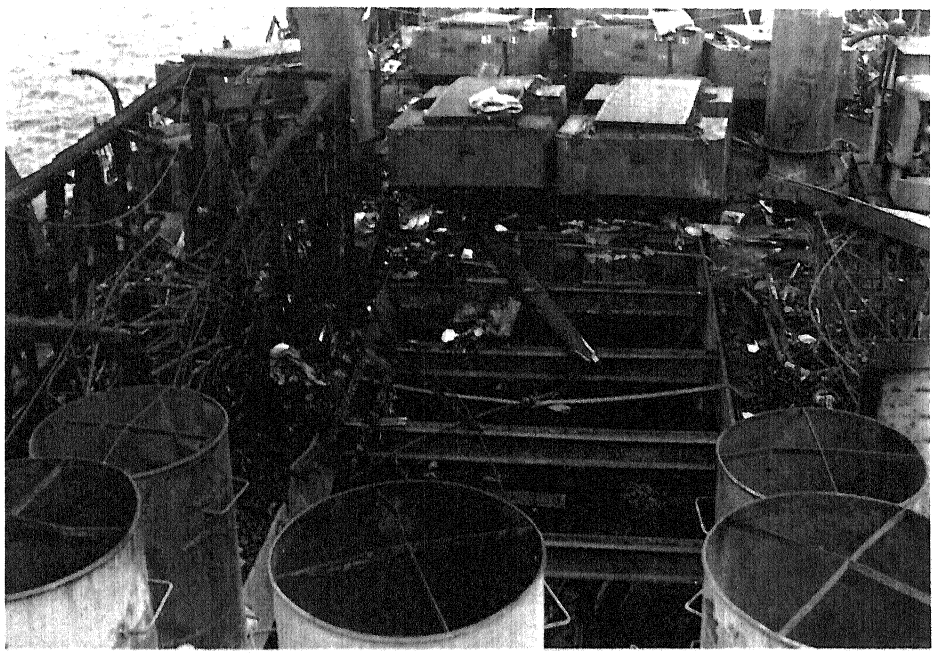
[71] *USS Catron* (APA-71) War Diary, 5 Apr. 1945.

the suicide plane, reinforced a belief in its potency the next day when eight ships in the Expeditionary Force, including a battleship, a light cruiser, three destroyers, a destroyer escort, a destroyer minesweeper, and a minelayer were all damaged by suicide planes.

As Admiral Turner remarked:

> One of the most effective weapons that the Japanese developed, in my opinion, was the use of the suicide bombers. The suiciders hurt the Navy badly at Okinawa. . . . Our chief method of defense was to spread out around the ships of the Amphibious Force at a considerable distance, pickets composed of one to five ships, destroyers, destroyer escorts, and small amphibious craft. . . .
>
> One of the things that was very fortunate for the transports and the troops was that the Japanese suicide airplanes, as soon as they began to be attacked by our outlying fighters, would themselves deliver attacks on our pickets instead of trying to penetrate our screen to attack our transports. It was tough on the pickets, but the Japanese themselves thus contributed to the successful defense of the vulnerable elements of the Amphibious Force.[72]

[72] R. K. Turner, Speech Delivered at the Air University, Maxwell Field, Alabama, 11 Feb. 1947, p. 17.



NH 69108

LST–884 on 1 April 1945 at Kerama Retto following an early morning kamikaze attack.

The landing craft (infantry) (LCI) had grown into a small gunboat, and was now labeled a landing craft support ship. The landing ship (medium) had been fitted with rockets and machine guns and was a potent anti-aircraft weapon. Both were ordered up to the radar picket line to provide additional heavy machine gun support for the destroyers, and also to provide a nearby rescue ship when the radar picket absorbed a kamikaze.

Both the large amphibious ships and smaller amphibious craft which had to fight back at this death-dealing weapon had the minimum in sophisticated gun controls which were needed to blow the kamikaze to smithereens before it came aboard. Despite this, they went about their multitude of tasks with enough equanimity to accomplish them effectively. Besides backing up the destroyer pickets, the tasks for the smaller amphibian included salvage duty, screening, and the unglamorous task of making smoke at night.

The Baka bomb, a piloted jet propelled explosive, which was launched from a twin-engined Japanese plane, was used to reinforce the kamikaze. Fortunately, the very high speed of this weapon tended to lead the Japanese to overshoot with it.

The most damaging air attack occurred on Friday, 6 April 1945, when 26 ships were hit by suicide planes and six of these sunk, including three amphibians, the *Hobbs Victory*, the *Logan Victory*, and the LST-447. Two more ships were damaged by horizontal bombers and due to even worse luck, seven United States ships were damaged by our own gunfire during the tremendous anti-aircraft gunfire effort.[73]

There were those who were discouraged and depressed by these losses. Fortunately, they were in the minority. One young officer in command of an LCI Mortar Support Division responded to his amphibian duties enthusiastically:

> The tension which was so apparent in the personnel three weeks past during the Kerama Retto operation has now completely disappeared and although none of the crews have been off the crowded ships since 15 January, morale is very high. The action of the past three weeks has reacted as a tonic. WITH MEN LIKE THIS, CLEANING OUT THE JAPS IS A CINCH.[74]

The Flotilla Commander noted that this division had performed its duties, "vigorously and decisively."

[73] Naval History Division, *United States Naval Chronology, World War II* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 141–42.

[74] Commander LCI Group 14, Okinawa Report and endorsements thereon, 20 Apr. 1945, p. 5.

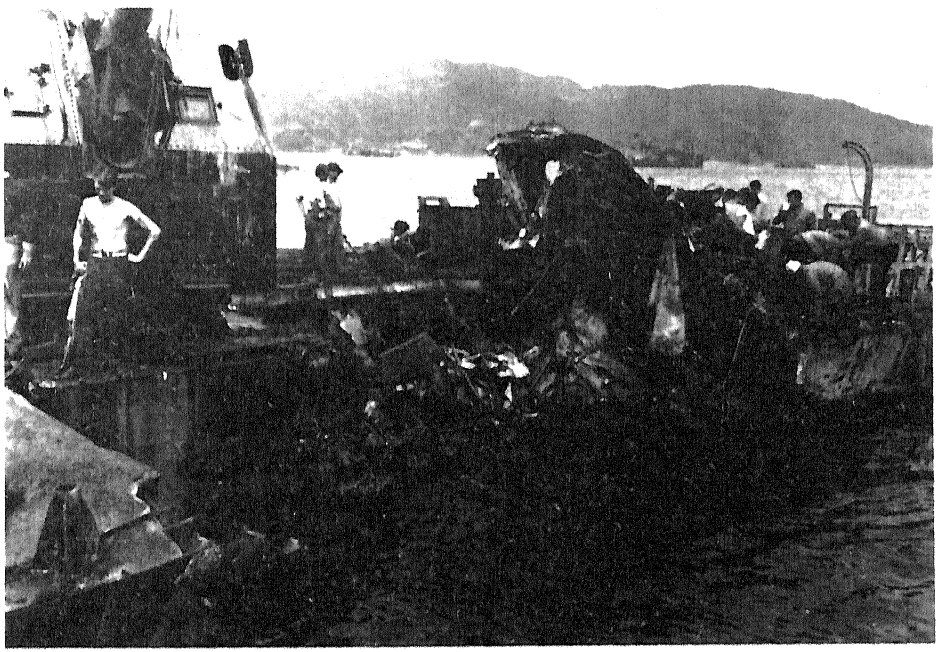
The kamikaze attacks wrought great damage on our ships, but as Admiral Turner wrote:

> By their steadfast courage and magnificent performance of duty in a nerve wracking job under morale shattering conditions, the crews of ships and craft in the Radar Picket Stations emblazoned a glorious new chapter in naval tradition.[75]

PRE-LANDING GUNFIRE SUPPORT

If there were any complaints in regard to pre-landing naval gunfire support at Okinawa, they are buried very deep in the files and not located by this researcher. Ten battleships, nine cruisers, twenty-three destroyers and one hundred and seventy-seven LCI gunboats of various types dropped a massive and debilitating rain of shells on enemy positions in Okinawa. By 16 May, more than 25,000 tons of ammunition had been expended.[76]

[75] COMPHIBSPAC Okinawa Report, Part II, p. 18.
[76] *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 15.



NH 69110

The famous USS Leutze *in Keramo Retto on 6 April 1945 after kamikaze attack.*

THE END RESULT

Okinawa was a tremendous victory for the United States and a very costly one for the United States Navy.

Admiral Turner made this bow to his own amphibians:

> The Amphibious Operations for the capture of Okinawa Gunto in terms of ships employed, naval gunfire delivered, naval air support conducted, and the magnitude of the logistic problems and distances involved may well be considered the largest single naval operation in the history of Pacific Ocean warfare. The capture of Okinawa Gunto with its potential base development will serve to further support the future operations in the China Sea, act as a springboard for attack on the main islands of Japan, and will serve as a base from which to sever the Japanese sea and air communication between the Asiatic mainland, Formosa, Malaya, and the East Indies.[77]

Fleet Admiral Nimitz's Headquarters in a background memorandum opined:

> In summary, Okinawa gives us:
>
> 1. a base for supplying bomber and fighter cover for invasion of either China or Japan or both.
> 2. a good anchorage and naval supply base within 400 miles of the coast of Japan.
> 3. a forward staging area.
> 4. an important base for furthering the war of attrition, in which sustained heavy bombing and air-sea blockade are our major weapons.[78]

THE COST

Three hundred and sixty-eight ships were damaged and thirty-six, including fifteen amphibious ships and twelve destroyers were sunk during the Okinawa campaign. One hundred and twelve amphibious ships and craft were damaged. The carnage among naval personnel was equally heavy. Four thousand nine hundred and seven officers and men of the Navy lost their lives, largely in battling the Japanese kamikazes. This was some six hundred more personnel killed than the Army suffered during the 25 March to 21 June battle, and some two thousand more than the Marines.[79]

It was a bloody struggle.

[77] *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 7.

[78] CINCPAC Advance Headquarters Background Memorandum No. 47, p. 3.

[79] CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Monthly Operations Report, May 1945. Figures for those dead are as of 5 November 1945.

GROWN TO FULL SIZE

When the last battle—Okinawa—was over and won, in the Pacific Fleet, the Amphibious Forces under Admiral Turner's command were manned by 657,000 officers and men and consisted of:

- 3 Amphibious Forces (3rd, 5th, 7th)
- 14 Amphibious Groups
- 1 Air Support Control Unit
- 14 Transport Squadrons of approximately 14 APAs and 6 AKAs each
- 27 LST Flotillas of 36 LSTs each
- 16 LCM Flotillas of 12 LCMs each
- 18 LCI Flotillas of 36 LCIs each
- 3 LCS Flotillas of 36 LCSs each
- 30 LCT Flotillas of 36 LCTs each
- 12 APD Divisions of 9 APDs each
- 140 APAs unassigned to Squadrons
- 20 AKAs unassigned to Squadrons
- 14 AGCs
- 11 LDSs
- 6 LSVs
- 1 Administrative Command with 5 subordinate bases and units
- 1 Training Command with 12 subordinate bases or schools
- 1 Underwater Demolition Team with 2 Squadrons.[80]

All the seagoing part of the command was not at Okinawa, as the usual rotation of ships and landing craft to shipyards for overhaul and improvement continued. Many new ships and craft were being trained and prepared for the prospective invasion of Japan. But some 1,213 ships and craft were employed by CTF 51 in the Assault Echelon and First Garrison Echelon of the Amphibious Force in the Okinawa campaign. The Landing Force totaled 182,112 troops, and the Garrison Force was half again as large. The total expeditionary troops employed was 451,866.

A RESPITE AND A PLANNING CHORE

One historian wrote:

> In late May, Admiral Nimitz decided that his principal naval commanders had borne the strain of great responsibility for long enough. They had been

[80] Administrative History of Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet.

> in continuous combat command at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and Nimitz thought it prudent to give them a rest. Too, he wished them to start planning for their important parts in the invasion of Kyushu, scheduled for the fall. Accordingly, he directed Admiral Halsey, Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill and Vice Admiral John S. McCain to relieve Spruance, Turner and Mitscher respectively.[81]

Actually, the despatch orders of the period will show that this decision was made in early April rather than "in late May." On 5 April, Fleet Admiral Nimitz had advised Fleet Admiral King that the country would be best served if Admiral Spruance commanded the naval phases of The Kyushu operation. Fleet Admiral King, on 9 April 1945, had informed Admiral Nimitz that the Fifth Fleet team of "Spruance and Turner" would command the naval phases of OLYMPIC (the invasion of Kyushu) and that they should be disengaged from ICEBERG as soon as practical. Fleet Admiral Nimitz flew into Yontan airfield on 22 April, and decided that the "disengagement" was becoming a practicality.[82]

On 1 May 1945, Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill, having been relieved of command of Amphibious Group Two, departed Pearl Harbor by air for Okinawa for the purpose of relieving Vice Admiral Turner as CTF 51. He arrived on board the *Eldorado* at Okinawa on 4 May 1945. The actual relief did not take place until 17 May, by which date it was considered possible to shift to Lieutenant General Buckner, Commanding General Tenth Army, responsibility for the defense and development of captured positions on Okinawa. The new CTF 51, on that date, reported to General Buckner for duty in control of the air defense of Okinawa and command of the Naval forces present.

When Admiral Hill was questioned in 1968 as to why he had taken two weeks in relieving, he said:

> My staff had a lot to learn in the very hot kamikaze situation at Okinawa, before they were fully ready to take over from Kelly's Staff. He was taking all his people with him (except his air controller) to plan for OLYMPIC. I wanted my staff to be on top of the situation. This took time.[83]

On an earlier occasion Admiral Hill had written:

> Relieving Turner at any time is tough. He had such a comprehensive grasp on every detail, and had a ready solution for every problem.[84]

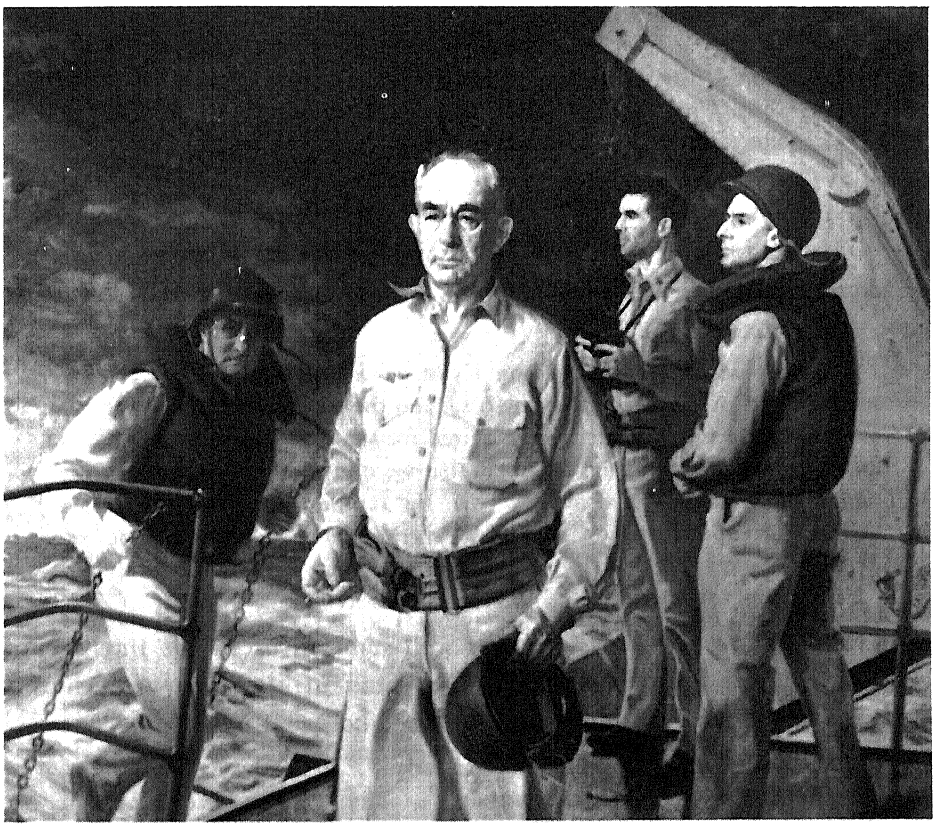
[81] Forrestel, *Spruance,* p. 215.
[82] COMINCH and CNO to CINCPAC 091921 Apr. 1945 and related despatches.
[83] Hill Interview, 15 Jan. 1968.
[84] Hill memo of 17 Nov. 1966.

It was a bit tougher at Okinawa.

It should be mentioned that Rear Admiral Hill had been promoted to Vice Admiral on 22 April 1945, and on that date had relieved Vice Admiral Turner, in absentia, as Commander Fifth Amphibious Force. Both Admiral Turner and Admiral Hill informed this writer that CINCPAC had named three officers as available for command of the Fifth Amphibious Force and had asked for recommendations and that the Turner choice, from among those three, had been Admiral Hill.

FOUR STARS

On 28 May 1945, while the *Eldorado* still was at Guam, notification



KN-5236

Oil painting of Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, with Captain James H. Doyle, Colonel Harold D. Harris and Commander John Lewis, by Albert K. Murray.

was received that Vice Admiral Turner was promoted to full Admiral, to date from 24 May 1945. He was the second and last officer in his Naval Academy Class (1908) to be promoted, while on the active list, to full admiral's rank, having been preceded by Admiral T. C. Kinkaid, who also had preceded him in promotion to the rank of Vice Admiral.

OLYMPIC

CINCPOA circulated his preliminary "Joint Staff Study" for OLYMPIC, the landing on the large southern Japanese home island of Kyushu, on 12 May 1945. COMPHIBSPAC did his planning for this operation in the *Eldorado* in Manila Bay, commencing on 14 June 1945, even though

> neither Admiral Nimitz or Spruance considered that it would ever be necessary to invade the homeland of Japan. Our naval blockade was rapidly strangling the Japanese economy and could prove to be a decisive factor for an early peace. They both, as well as Admiral King, vigorously opposed the later decision of the JCS to invade Japan.[85]

OLYMPIC PURPOSE

Admiral Turner on 11 February 1947, in an address to the Air University, said:

> The purpose of the landings on Kyushu was the neutralization of the southern part of Japan as an enemy base, and the establishment there of our own military, naval, and air bases required for the close tactical and strategical support of land, sea, and air forces that were to be employed later in the capture of Kyushu. We also hoped that the capture of Kyushu, combined with concurrent intensive operations by American strategic sea and air forces, might itself provide the Emperor of Japan with some reasons for surrendering before our invasion of Honshu became necessary.[86]

The situation in Mid-May 1945 was well summed up by the Intelligence Officer on Admiral Spruance's Fifth Fleet Staff in his Okinawa turn-over memorandum to the Third Fleet Intelligence Officer.

> The Japanese gamble for Empire has failed. . . . Of the fighting forces, only the Army remains relatively strong. . . . The Japanese are defeated but we have not yet won the victory.[87]

[85] Hill memo of 17 Nov. 1966. See also *King's Record*, p. 366 and Forrestel, *Spruance*, p. 164.
[86] Turner's speech, 11 Feb. 1947, p. 2.
[87] COMFIFTHFLT to Admiral Halsey, memorandum, 17 May 1945, subj: Transfer of Command, Annex D, p. 1.

It was hoped by those who had never heard of an atomic bomb, that OLYMPIC would win the victory.

Amphibiously, under Admiral Turner's command, there were to be 2,700 ships and craft in the Kyushu operation. There had been 1,213 ships and craft under his command for the Okinawa operation, 435 for the Marianas operation and 51 at Guadalcanal.

Admiral Turner noted:

> After leaving Okinawa on May 19, I proceeded to Guam to consult with the Staffs of Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Spruance. Then in the middle of June, I went to Manila to arrange the cooperation between the Army and Navy for the future amphibious attack on the southern part of Kyushu, whose date was set for November 1, 1945. . . .[88]

The question of who would command all Army forces in the Pacific Theater and who would command all the Naval forces in the Pacific Theater, and who actually would command the forces in the invasion of Japan, had in no way been settled by the command order issued by Admiral Nimitz on 19 November 1944 for the invasion of Okinawa. But it was a straw in the wind indicating how the larger problem would be settled.

After months of discussion, an Army proposal was adopted, assigning General MacArthur the responsibility for planning and preparing for the land campaign in Japan, cooperating with Admiral Nimitz in these plans and preparations, and assigning Admiral Nimitz the responsibility of planning and preparing for the naval and amphibious phases of the invasion of Japan.[89]

As Admiral Turner remarked:

> The agreements entered into between General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz, and approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were that General MacArthur, *in an emergency, could exercise supreme command for the operation for the invasion of Japan, both at Kyushu and later in Honshu.* General MacArthur was to be the sole judge as to when such an emergency arose. . . .
>
> General MacArthur agreed to retention by the Commander of the Amphibious Force of command of the Naval Forces and the Air Forces in the objective area until such time as the amphibious phase of the operation had been completed. . . .

[88] Turner's speech, 11 Feb. 1947, p. 11.

[89] (a) JCS 1259, Memo by C/S USA, Command in the Pacific, 26 Feb. 45; (b) COMINCH-CINCPAC Conference, 6 Mar. 1945; (c) JCS 1259/2 and JCS 1259/3; (d) Minutes of COMINCH Proposed Directive for Reorganization and Future Operations in the Pacific Theater, 10 Mar. 1945.

And his judgment of what, in effect, was a transfer of Japan from the area under command of Admiral Nimitz to an area under General MacArthur, was that:

> This decision was, I believe, justified because of the final over-riding importance, in an extensive land campaign of the operations of ground troops.[90]

Between 14 June 1945, when Admiral Turner arrived in Manila Bay, and the dropping of the first atomic bomb at Hiroshima, Japan, on 6 August 1945, the staff of Commander Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet worked under a full head of steam in planning the amphibious phases of OLYMPIC. From 9 August until 15 August 1945, when a message was received from CINCPAC to cease all offensive operations against Japan, fires were slowly drawn from the OLYMPIC planning boilers, and lighted off on the planning for the demobilization of the Pacific Fleet Amphibious Forces. On 25 August 1945, Admiral Turner departed by air for Guam, later to proceed to Tokyo with CINCPAC to be present at the formal surrender of the Japanese.

A LONG LOOK AHEAD

After a little over two years' service following graduation from the Naval Academy, Ensign Turner wrote to his mother a few thoughts about the Navy and naval officers:

> [The Navy] It takes a man's best and most earnest work and then not content with that, it takes his soul right out of him if he is not very careful—sucks him dry as a bone and then throws him aside to the dump heap.
>
> * * * * *
>
> A naval officer of sixty is an old, old man, incapable of doing the work that a man of that age should do.[91]

Kelly Turner observed his sixtieth birthday at Okinawa. He was far from having been thrown on the dump heap, but he had many aches and pains and was leaning rather heavily on the bottle to keep himself physically doing his job which was well within the scope of his mental abilities. He had driven himself—at top speed through three years of combat—and only the Turner clan's love of hard work, and the *umph* from the bottom of the

[90] Turner's speech, 11 Feb. 1947, pp. 12–13.
[91] RKT to Mother, letter 28 Oct. 1910.

bottle had kept Richmond Kelly Turner doing the work he relished so heartily.

One officer on his staff summarized the situation:

> All the way back to Guam, he slept, rested and drank nothing but orange juice. When we arrived, he was his old self, able to persuade Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Spruance that there was no one in the United States Navy more capable than he in planning for Operation OLYMPIC. . . .[92]

[92] Rear Admiral William C. Mott, USN (Ret.) to GCD, letter, 6 Dec. 1967.

CHAPTER XXV

End of the War and United Nations Organization Duty

THE END OF THE WAR

Admiral Turner preserved this eloquent statement by General MacArthur:

> Peace has again come to the world. The full measure of gratitude and honor for the victory, which has made that peace possible, belongs to the men of the Armed Forces.
>
> I know full well that the greatest reward that you can ask for your courage and devotion to Service is a speedy return to your homes, to your loved ones, and to the enjoyment of the peace that you have so richly earned. And I assure you that this reward will be yours as speedily and as effectively as the consolidation and securing of the peace can be accomplished through the orderly occupation of Japan and the demobilization of Japanese armed forces.
>
> The answer to your question: 'When will I go Home?' depends to a major extent upon the manner in which those of us who are assigned to duty with the occupation forces carry out our mission.
>
> We have fought and won a war to protect the rights of the individual—for freedom, tolerance, and justice for all the peoples of the world. Each of us must keep that constantly in mind.
>
> Occupation of Japan must take place without unnecessary violence; without undue oppression. Property and personal rights of the Japanese people are to be respected. Looting, pillage, rape, and other deliberate violations of universal standards of human behaviour would but stain your own high honor.
>
> On the battlefield, you won respect at the point of the bayonet. It is the responsibility of each of you, by your conduct, behaviour and performance of duty to maintain an equal respect as victors who believe in and practice the principles for which we fought.[1]

TENACITY OF PURPOSE

The Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee was thoughtful enough to send Admiral Turner the following message:

[1] General MacArthur to the Armed Forces Pacific upon the occupation of Japan, 2 Sep. 1945, and retained by Admiral Turner in his personal files.

PLAIN 161200 DEFERRED
HONORABLE CARL VINSON SENDS TO ADMIRAL TURNER. WE OF THE HOUSE NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HAVE WATCHED WITH GREAT ADMIRATION YOUR OUTSTANDING WORK AS AN AMPHIBIOUS COMMANDER IN THE OPERATIONS IN THE PACIFIC. OUR SUCCESSES ON LAND HAVE BEEN IN A LARGE MEASURE DUE TO YOUR SKILL, COURAGE AND TENACITY OF PURPOSE IN CONDUCTING THESE OPERATIONS. YOUR DEVOTION TO DUTY HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US
005017 AUG 45/RTT/14205 KCS/GR 70/PLAIN/NPN N$ 1825/RFP
RDO WASHINGTON ACTION/COMPHIBSPAC

THE TURNER APPRAISAL OF THE JAPANESE

Immediately after attending the Japanese surrender ceremony aboard the *USS Missouri* on 2 September 1945, and returning to his temporary flagship, Admiral Turner signaled Rear Admiral James L. Hall, Commander Tokyo Force, asking whether there was a sedan on board which could be made available to take Turner to Tokyo. Rear Admiral Hall sent his aide ashore to ask General Eichelberger, the Army Area Commander, if there were any objection to Admiral Turner and himself driving into Tokyo. The General, diplomatically, did not say "yes" and he did not say "no." He said that the Army had not established patrols in Tokyo as yet and that the 1st Cavalry Division would not move into Tokyo for about a week.[2]

Despite this polite suggestion that the visit might be personally risky and better not be undertaken, the sightseers including Rear Admiral Hall and Captain James H. Doyle drove off, stopping first at a police station to get driving instructions as to how to get to the American Embassy and from there to the shrine of Admiral Tojo, victor of the Battle of Tsushima Straits in the 1904–1905 Russian-Japanese War. Admiral Turner had been taken to the Tojo Shrine during the official ceremonies connected with his visit when aboard the *Astoria* in 1939.

Vice Admiral Doyle recalled:

> We went into a police station to get a road map. The police were very polite to us and we were very polite to them. When we came out of the police station, Admiral Turner said: 'When they surrendered, they really surrendered.'

[2] Interview with Vice Admiral James H. Doyle, USN (Ret.), 9 Feb. 1962. Hereafter J. H. Doyle.

As we stood in front of the Tojo Shrine, Admiral Turner made the amazing prediction:

> 'If we play our cards well, the Japanese will become our best and most worthwhile friends. They have certain fundamental virtues in their character which in time, I hope, will be appreciated by all worthwhile Americans. We should be most careful to respect their Gods and their traditions, and I hope they will come in time to respect ours.'

Admiral Turner bowed to the Tojo Shrine before departing. The rest of us sort of awkwardly followed suit.

When we went ashore in Kyoto a little later, we found the city, which was not a target for United States Army Air Force bombing, was largely unharmed, but a few areas had been mistakenly bombed. There the papier mache shacks had burned to the ground and there was the strong and bad odor of people buried under the rubble. Admiral Turner said:

> 'The American people will never appreciate how lucky they were not to have to fight the war, while their homeland was being bombed, like the Germans and Japanese.' [3]

HEADING HOME

Admiral Spruance told Rear Admiral James L. Hall in Tokyo Bay, soon after the signing of the Japanese Armistice, that both he and Fleet Admiral Nimitz were anxious to get Admiral Turner back home, since Turner had been under a tremendous strain for a long, long time.[4]

Soon after 2 September 1945, Admiral Nimitz thoughtfully wired Admiral Turner:

> At such time in near future as you consider practicable, propose send you home on leave, with Wilkinson taking over your duties during your absence. Reply giving your estimate as to time you consider it will be feasible for you to depart.

The reply:

> Your . . . much appreciated but would greatly prefer remain on station until I can be permanently relieved. In Tokyo you indicated your desire for Type Commanders to proceed Pearl at an early date presumably in connection with matters concerned with demobilization which I consider important and complex. Estimate I can leave Manila about 20 September and for that purpose earnestly request I not be sent home on leave until a satisfactory demobilization program has been worked out for PHIBSPAC and at that time I be detached to other duty.

[3] J. H. Doyle.

[4] Interview with Admiral James L. Hall, USN (Ret.), 1 Nov. 1961.



Turner Collection

Mrs. Richmond Kelly Turner with Mrs. George H. Fort, wife of Admiral Fort, Commander Amphibious Training Command U. S. Pacific Fleet; Mrs. W. L. Friedell, wife of Admiral Friedell, Commandant Eleventh Naval District; and others at Navy Day Luncheon, San Diego, 27 October 1945.

Admiral Nimitz deferred to his junior's desires.

Prior to Admiral Turner's relief, the Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel sent to him as COMPHIBSPAC the names of three Flag officers with very broad amphibious command experience during World War II and asked COMPHIBSPAC to arrange the three names in order of his recommendation as to which one should be his relief as Commander Amphibious Forces Pacific. His number one recommendation, Rear Admiral John L. Hall, was accepted by the Flag officer detailers in Washington.[5]

When Admiral Turner arrived at Pearl in early October 1945, he was handed the following message from Fleet Admiral Nimitz:

> A hearty welcome to PEARL and a 'Well Done' to the man who not only knew how, but did. 022129.

On 14 October 1945, Rear Admiral John L. Hall relieved Admiral Turner,

[5] Turner.

and he proceeded to Carmel, California for his month's leave, interrupted only by official participation in Navy Day ceremonies and speeches at San Diego, on 27 October 1945.

TEMPORARY DETAIL—GENERAL BOARD

When Admiral Turner arrived in Washington, he was under orders to report to the Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel for further assignment. On 13 November 1945, he so reported and was immediately ordered to the General Board, which was used as a "Receiving Ship" for senior officers about to testify before the Congressional investigation into the Pearl Harbor attack, which began its sessions on 15 November 1945.

Prior to testifying, he had the opportunity to review his previous testimony given before the Roberts Commission on 19 January 1942, the Admiral Thomas C. Hart Inquiry on the 3rd and 4th of April 1944, and the Navy Court of Inquiry headed by Admiral Orin G. Murfin on 15 September 1944.

On this last date, Vice Admiral Turner had been subjected to considerable cross examination by the interested parties, Admiral Harold R. Stark and Rear Admiral Husband E. Kimmel. Admiral Hart previously also had closely examined him in connection with the action taken or not taken by the War Plans Division of Naval Operations prior to 7 December 1941.

As indicated previously, there was no major difference in the testimony given on these three occasions with that given by Admiral Turner to the Congressional Inquiry Committee.[6]

Admiral Turner did not testify before the Admiral H. K. Hewitt Inquiry which convened in May 1945, as he was busily engaged fighting kamikazes at Okinawa or later in planning for the invasion of Japan.

UNITED NATIONS MILITARY COMMITTEE

Admiral Turner did not seek the United Nations Security Council Military Staff Committee detail. He had asked to be detailed as President of the Naval War College, but he was far from being the only aspirant to that high posi-

[6] (a) U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, *Hearings: Pearl Harbor Attack* (79th Cong., 1st sess., part 23, 2 Jan. 1942. Pursuant to S. Con. Res. 27, 79th Cong.) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 1084–1095, 1113. Hereafter cited as *Pearl Harbor Hearings;* (b) *Ibid.*, part 26, pp. 263–87; (c) *Ibid.*, part 33, pp. 876–89; (d) *Ibid.*, part 4, pp. 1911–2063.



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Portrait of Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, USN, 1946.

tion in the immediate post-World War II period. That assignment was given to Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, Turner's long-time commander during the Pacific War, and twice previously on the Staff of the Naval War College. Admiral Turner told me in 1961 that:

> If the detail had been given to anyone else, I would have been really mad, but I didn't question Spruance's outstanding qualifications or the fact that he had first claim on the job.[7]

In late 1945, in writing to an Army general who had served with him during the Okinawa campaign, he had said:

> I did not get the assignment as President of the Naval War College, as Spruance is to have that sometime in the spring. However, I have been ordered to duty which may be even more interesting . . . that of the United States Representative on the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations Organization.[8]

Fleet Admiral Nimitz had written on Admiral Turner's fitness reports covering the 31 March 1944 to 12 March 1945 period:

> Admiral Turner is well qualified for high naval command and also for important duties in connection with international politico-military affairs, and the formulation of national strategy.

During much of the time Admiral Turner was having a one month's cruise on the General Board, 14 November 1945–17 December 1945, and was preparing himself for his prospective appearance before the Joint Congressional Committee Investigating Pearl Harbor, Fleet Admiral Nimitz was in Washington preparing to take command of the Navy as Chief of Naval Operations. This office which Fleet Admiral Nimitz took over on 15 December 1945, traditionally has had the last naval word on the detail of senior Flag officers. Holding the opinion which Fleet Admiral Nimitz had expressed a year before in Turner's fitness report, the United Nations detail was a natural assignment for Admiral Turner.

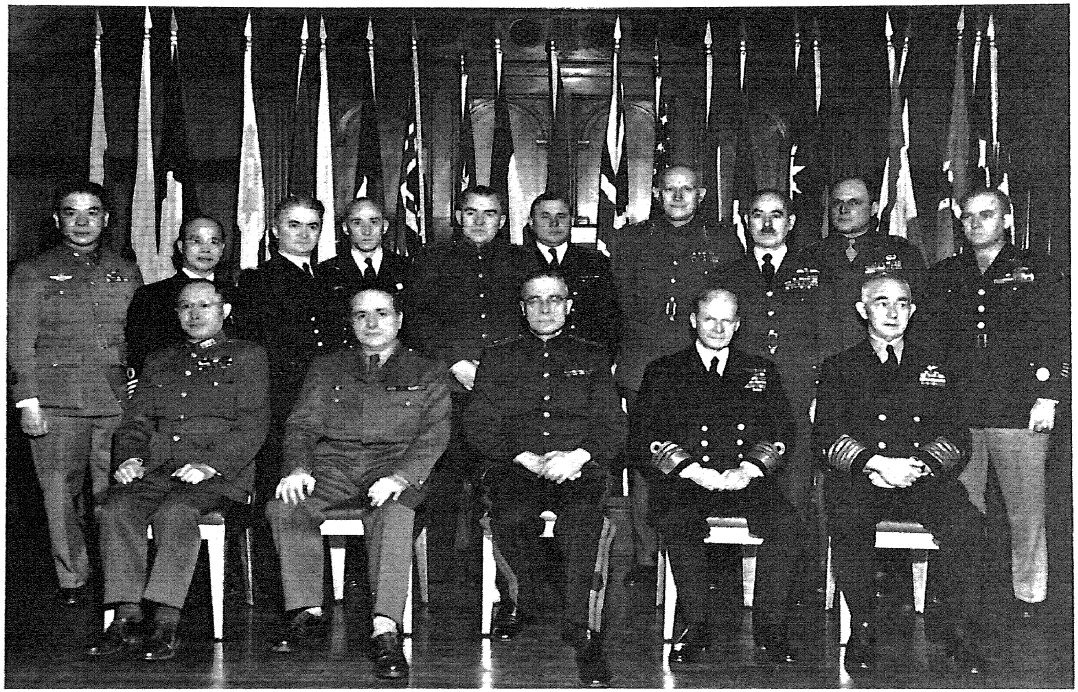
It could have been rationalized that sending Admiral Turner to the United Nations Organization would provide a brainy, resourceful and tough opponent to deal with the Soviets at a crucial international meeting point. It also would afford an opportunity for an officer obviously exhausted physically from the war, but still mentally alert, to catch his breath.

Admiral Turner was detached from the General Board on 17 December 1945, and the same day reported to the new Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Admiral Nimitz, for duty as the representative of the naval member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the Military Staff Committee in the United Nations Organization.

Before the year 1945 was ended, Admiral Turner was headed for London, England, to participate in United Nations affairs as an advisor to the United

[7] Turner.

[8] RKT to Major General A. D. Bruce, USA, letter, 14 Dec. 1945.



United Nations, Department of Public Information

Military Staff Committee of the United Nations, 17 January 1947.
***Seated—Left to right:** General Yo Ying Chen, China; Lieutenant General Pierre Billotte, France; Lieutenant General Alexander F. Vasiliev, USSR; Admiral Sir Henry R. Moore, United Kingdom; Admiral R. Kelly Turner, United States.*
***Standing—Left to right:** Lieutenant General Mow Pong Tsu, China; Captain Tang Chin Liao, China; Rear Admiral Raymond Moullec, France; Colonel Henri Lanzin, France; Lieutenant General Andrei Sharapov, USSR; Vice Admiral Valentin L. Bogdenko, USSR; General Sir Edwin L. Morris, United Kingdom; Air Chief Marshall Sir Guy Garrod, United Kingdom; Lieutenant General Mathew B. Ridgway, United States; Brigadier General Charles P. Cabell, United States.*

States Delegation to the General Assembly at their first meeting in London. It was 22 March 1946, before Admiral Turner arrived in New York City and assumed his duties on the Military Staff Committee of the Security Council, United Nations Organization, as the representative of the Chief of Naval Operations in the latter's capacity as a member of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Military Staff Committee consisted of military personnel from the five permanent members of the Security Council (the United States, China, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union). These nations attached sizeable numbers of officers of their Army, Navy, and Air Forces to this Committee. The other two initial members of the United States Military Staff Committee were General George C. Kenney, U. S. Air Force, and Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway, U. S. Army.

It should be recalled that when Kelly Turner arrived in New York City in 1946, the organization now known as the "UN" was then known as the "UNO," the United Nations Organization.

Extracts from some of Mrs. Turner's letters of the March to June period of 1946 recall some of the uncertainties in regard to just where UNO Headquarters would be established.

> The poor UNO. Nobody but San Francisco seems to want them.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Nothing seems certain just where UNO will light.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Kelly leaves early and gets home late. Hasn't been home for dinner for two nights now.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Everyone is upset by the possible move to Lake Success. If they do, we will have to move to Long Island.

The letters also recall some of the post-World War II problems, and indicate the center of Mrs. Turner's interest.

> I have seen two lines in New York, several blocks long, waiting to buy nylons.
>
> * * * * *
>
> I hate apartments.
>
> * * * * *
>
> I have a horror of newspapers.
>
> * * * * *
>
> The dogs are fine and seem very happy.

* * * * *

I have never seen the dogs so hungry and so friendly with people. They let everyone pet them and don't seem at all afraid.

* * * * *

We are having thunderstorms and the dogs are unhappy.[9]

ADMIRAL TURNER'S STAFF

The senior naval officer on Admiral Turner's staff was Rear Admiral John J. Ballentine (1918). Rear Admiral Ballentine, a long-time naval aviator, had participated with Admiral Turner in the Gilbert Island campaign. He wrote:

> My friend, Admiral Kelly Turner . . . insisted that the Navy order me as his Chief of Staff and Deputy. . . . I was not particularly happy over the change in orders, because I had developed into an old seadog and I wanted to get back to sea. However, this was something that had to be accepted, and I accepted it with good grace, principally because my old friend Admiral Turner was so insistent that I come and help him with this job.[10]

Admiral Ballentine told me:

> Back in 1933, when Kelly was Exec of the *Saratoga* and I, as a lieutenant commander, was in command of a torpedo squadron (VT-2B) attached to the *Saratoga,* my squadron flew out for an operation after a period of shore basing.
>
> The next morning, my personnel officer came to me and reported: 'Captain, the ship is giving our men a rough deal, inadequate living spaces, and messing facilities.'
>
> I took a good look at the matter during the day, and after dinner that night, I went to the Exec's cabin. Kelly had the reputation of being a tough old so and so, and so I fully expected to be bawled out, when I presented my case. To my surprise, Kelly just asked for all the facts and then said: 'I don't know, but I'll look into it.' And the next day he did look into it, and called me in that evening and said: 'You were quite right. Your people were not getting a fair break and I have fixed it.'
>
> Thus began a pleasant association with Kelly that lasted until his death. My fitness reports made out by Kelly and signed by the Skipper, Rufus Zogbaum, were the finest received by me during my whole career.
>
> Mrs. Turner was a charming lady, kind and friendly.[11]

[9] HST to LTT, letters, 27 Mar. 1946; 6 Apr. 1946; 9 Apr. 1946; 18 Apr. 1946; 5 May 1946; 20 Jun. 1946.

[10] Interview with Admiral John J. Ballentine, USN (Ret.), 10 Nov. 1967. Hereafter Ballentine.

[11] *Ibid.*



Turner Collection

Vice Admiral and Mrs. John J. Ballantine, USN, at the time he was Commander Sixth Fleet.

Admiral Turner was also able to get three officers from his first Staff, PHIBFORSOPAC, assigned to the supporting organization for the Military Staff Committee. These were Captain James H. Doyle, USN, Colonel Harold D. Harris, USMC, and Commander John S. Lewis, USN. This trio had survived the severe "selection out" process which Kelly Turner applied to all who worked for him. They were not only intelligent but quick-witted and sharp-tongued. They were loyal and could be depended upon to take care of the "Old Man" on those occasions when he needed taking care of. They watched over him, ensured that he was sober when it was at all desirable or necessary for him to be sober, and indulged him, when the press of affairs permitted. They picked his brains for early drafts of papers.[12]

The small staff of ten officers also included Captain Elliott B. Strauss (1923), Captain Denys W. Knoll (1930) who acted as Secretary to the Military Staff Committee of the United States Delegation, and Commander Thomas H. Morton (1933), Commander R. J. C. Maulsby (1932), Lieu-

[12] J. H. Doyle, Lewis.

tenant Colonel R. J. Hoey, USMC, and Lieutenant Paul A. Terry, USNR. Captain Strauss, Captain Knoll, and Commander Morton accompanied Admiral Turner to London.

Rear Admiral Strauss recalls his assignment as a captain to this staff, as follows:

> When I was appointed to the Military Staff Committee, Admiral Art Davis [Arthur C. (1915)] advised me against taking the job. He said Admiral Turner was a difficult man and had reached a difficult stage of his career. I was not wise enough to take this good advice.[13]

Rear Admiral Strauss doubted that Admiral Turner was the correct man for the UNO billet. In fact, he was convinced that it was a very poor choice because of Admiral Turner's lack of sobriety or tact at chosen moments.

In this connection, the following story is told by Rear Admiral William C. Mott, currently Executive Vice President of the United States Independent Telephone Association.

> The Chief United States Military Representative to the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations, Admiral Turner, attended one of the first organizing conferences of the U.N. in London in early 1946. That conference was attended, among others, by the United States Ambassador from [to] Turkey, Ambassador Wilson, United States Ambassador from [to] Greece, Ambassador McVeagh, and our Minister from [to] Syria, who was at that time, I believe, Mr. Wadsworth. John Foster Dulles marked this conference in London in a speech he later gave on the Senate floor at the beginning of the Cold War.
>
> The night of his return from London, Admiral Turner and I were having dinner together at the Chevy Chase Club. I would guess that the President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union might have said that he had had too many cocktails, but cocktails or no his mind was as sharp as ever.
>
> I had been telling him about a routine call received that afternoon from Stanley Woodward, who was then Chief of Protocol in the Department of State. Mr. Woodward had asked me in my capacity as Navy Liaison Officer with the Department of State whether it might be possible to furnish a small ship like a destroyer to send the body of ex-Ambassador Ertegun back to his native Turkey. The Ambassador had died here during the war and his widow was now requesting the United States to do for him as it had for Ambassador Saito of Japan and Lord Lothian of Great Britain, send his remains back to his native land. No decision had been made by the Navy with respect to this request, because it had come in too late that afternoon.
>
> As I told the story, Admiral Turner went through one of those strange metamorphoses which I had observed in him so often during the war. His

[13] Admiral Strauss to GCD, letter, 1 Nov. 1967. Hereafter Strauss.

whole demeanor changed. He dropped his knife and fork, and his whole physical and mental bearing seemed to change.

'That's it! We will go see Admiral Sherman (the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations) in the morning.'

Quite frankly, I didn't know what he was talking about, but I knew from experience that something was churning in that mind, a mind which never stopped its probing, its sifting, its relating of seemingly unrelated events to the solution of a major problem.

It seems that while in London, Ambassadors McVeagh and Wilson as well as Mr. Wadsworth had impressed upon Admiral Turner that if the United States didn't do something to shore up the crumbling countries in the Mediterranean basin they might soon go Communist. He remembered those conversations in London and related them to the story about Mrs. Ertegun's request. His idea was to convince the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, the Chief of Naval Operations, the State Department and the President that we should send the body of Ambassador Ertegun back to his native Turkey in the greatest funeral cortege ever known to man.

The very next morning he charged (and charged was always the word to describe him on a mission) in to see the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations and convinced him that the strongest representation should be made to the Chief of Naval Operations, the Department of State and the President of the United States that his proposed course of action for the funeral procession should be followed, and that he should be permitted to carry the ball for the project. Such was Kelly Turner's persuasiveness, his forcefulness, that he sold his idea all the way up the line. Historians will remember that the battleship *Missouri* became the funeral bier and the cruiser *Providence* and a squadron of destroyers went along to make calls in the major ports of the Mediterranean. So great was their reception that the Sixth Fleet was born. Many people feel that the Sixth Fleet kept the whole Mediterranean basin from becoming a Communist Lake. The idea was Kelly Turner's—one might say he had it in his cups.[14]

UNO PROBLEMS

Because so much water has gone under the international bridge in the last twenty years, few remember that the Charter of the United Nations provided for military security forces, under the control of the Security Council, and that in 1946 and 1947 strenuous efforts were made by the United States to organize such military forces.

Admiral Turner turned to and, with the aid of all the other members of the United States Military Committee and of advisers from the State Depart-

[14] Rear Admiral William C. Mott, USN (Ret.), to GCD, letter, 6 Dec. 1967.

ment, drafted a paper setting forth the principles which should govern the organization and use of the United Nations Armed Forces. This paper was circulated to all the other military delegations of the Military Staff Committee.

Admiral Ballentine recalled:

> The Russians were there for the sole purpose of blocking anything of any consequence.
>
> The United States Military delegation, properly considered that the first item of business before the committee was to organize the United Nations Armed Forces, and accordingly worked up a good paper on the principles governing the organization of the Armed Forces. We were not very coy about this and submitted copies to other delegations for consideration. The Russians said 'Oh, this is a very important paper, we must study it carefully.' Thereupon they refused to attend any meeting for six months because they were still studying the paper.
>
> * * * * *
>
> We had weekly meetings and the Russians just didn't attend. They didn't show.[15]



Courtesy of Max Peter Haas, New York City

Major General Leslie C. Groves, U. S. Army, and Admiral Turner.

[15] Ballentine.

Not only did the Soviet Union officers not attend the regularly scheduled weekly meetings of the Committee, but more importantly, they did not advise the other nations of their position in regard to the matter in any way.

The official record reads as follows:

> *12 April, 1946*
>
> The Military Staff Committee met at 11:30 on Wednesday, the 10th, two weeks after the previous meeting. There were no substantive matters to take up. The subcommittee of the Military Staff Committee dealing with the principles of military agreements [basic principles governing the organization of the United Nations Forces] has not been able to meet because the Soviet Delegation has not as yet submitted its paper.
>
> * * * * *
>
> *15 July, 1946*
>
> The Soviet Union has not yet done so, nor has it set a date for so doing.
>
> * * * * *
>
> *13 September, 1946*
>
> In the course of the conversation, General Kenny also learned from General Vasiliev that the Russian Representatives on the United Nations Military Staff Committee receive their instructions direct from Moscow and that no one in the United States, including Mr. Gromyko, can authorize any deviation from these instructions.[16]

In late September 1946, the Soviet Military Staff Committee submitted a paper which dealt only with the "Purposes of the United Nations Armed Forces," a small part of the over-all problem, and indicated that they would not proceed further until this matter was commonly agreed on. This did not occur until 13 November 1946, when a subcommittee of the Military Staff Committee was directed to go to work on an eight point agenda.

Following this, the Soviet Military Staff Committee would not proceed with any part of the agenda until all previous parts had been commonly agreed on. And then they decided that no discussions of proposals could take place unless all five nations were prepared to discuss the matter. The Soviets then stated they were not presently so prepared.[17]

When they finally did state their position, it was one designed to provide a lopsided United Nations Armed Forces. The Soviet Union insisted that the five permanent members could each make only equal contributions to

[16] U.S. Naval Representative (RKT), Military Staff Committee, United Nations, to Chief of Naval Operations, letters, 12 Apr. 1946, 15 Jul. 1946, 13 Sep. 1946, subj: Weekly Report of Military Staff Committee Proceedings.

[17] RKT to CNO, letters, 15 Nov. 1946, 6 Dec. 1946, 3 Mar. 1947, subj: Weekly Report of Military Staff Committee Proceedings.

the United Nations Armed Forces. Since China had no seagoing Navy to speak of—no carriers, no cruisers, no battleships and no submarines—this proposal meant that the United Nations Armed Forces, in effect, would have no seagoing naval power available, an essential element for peace-keeping operations, as had been repeatedly demonstrated during the last several hundred years, and continued to be demonstrated in the United Nations Assembly's peace-keeping operations in Korea during the British-Egyptian confrontation at Suez and even in darkest Africa.

However, the Soviets apparently became convinced, either during World War II or later, of the place of sea power as an instrument of national power, because in the last twenty years they have built a large Navy and a very large merchant marine, and are fast moving past the United States in strength at sea, and far exceeding the United States in the appreciation of sea power.

As Rear Admiral Strauss so well observed:

> After the establishment of the Military Staff Committee, it soon became clear that, because of Russian intransigence it was impotent.[18]

THE ATOM BOMB

In 1946, the problem of controlling the use of the atom bomb militarily was another point for discussion with the Soviets, but since they didn't have the bomb and wouldn't have it for some years, this problem was given a lesser priority. With other Americans, however, the bomb had a very high priority. The questions were how the bomb was to be produced, handled and controlled by the governmental authorities of the United States, and

> After Mr. Baruch presented his plan publicly to the Secretary Council in June, 1946, RKT became the unofficial military advisor to Baruch, working with such men as Baruch himself, Hancock, Swope, Oppenheimer, Ludecke.[19]

Mrs. Turner in a letter to the Admiral's sister, without a date, but written during this period, said:

> All of Kelly's work is in New York. He always is at the meetings with Baruch on atomic bombs.[20]

[18] Strauss.

[19] Rear Admiral Thomas H. Morton, USN (Ret.), to GCD, memorandum, Dec. 1967. Hereafter Morton.

[20] HST to LLT, letter.



Turner Collection

Mrs. Turner and her dogs.

Early meetings of the United Nations Organization in the United States, attended by Admiral Turner, were at Hunter College in New York City and later at the Sperry plant at Lake Success.

While Admiral Turner was on duty at the Headquarters for the United States delegation to the United Nations, this Headquarters was located at 210 W. 57th Street, New York City. The Military Staff Committee held its meetings on the fifth floor of the Fisk Building at 250 W. 57th Street where the U. S. Military Staff Secretariat had offices.

The Turner family lived at Hotel Suburban in Summit, New Jersey. Mrs. Turner gave an important reason for choosing this hotel:

> They like dogs. . . . The walking is easy and the dogs seem to like it. . . .

However, there were disadvantages to the location, as Mrs. Turner's letters indicated:

> My greatest problem is how I can leave the dogs long enough to get to New York and back. . . . It takes an hour and a half by train and ferry and then taxi.[21]

[21] HST to LLT, letter, 26 Mar. 1946.

During this 1946 period, Admiral Turner wrote:

> The work here is interesting, and rather new to the past experience of any of us. There is a very sincere desire on the part of practically everyone to make this United Nations thing work. Whether it will or not, remains for the future to disclose. In any case, I, for one, expect to view the situations that arise in a very realistic manner, and with due regard to past human experience.[22]

When asked to comment on the United Nations Military Staff Committee negotiations during the 1946–1947 period, Admiral Ballentine, who as previously indicated, was Deputy to Admiral Turner, said:

> Diplomacy is completely frustrating to somebody like Kelly Turner and to me, because you fan the air, and fan a lot of papers, and get absolutely nowhere with it.
>
> Kelly Turner held up very well under this frustrating experience. I admired him very much, because the task was hopeless to try to accomplish anything, but he kept trying, and kept his temper. I thought him an excellent negotiator.[23]

The Russians had come out of World War II in a powerful position, and every reasonable effort was being made at the council table to try to make reasonable people out of them. And it was natural to try to cultivate them socially, even though Mrs. Turner wrote: "The Russians are being pretty tough." She continued:

> Took the Russians to the Rodeo. They all loved it, and it was a beautiful and very exciting show. . . .
>
> * * * * *
>
> General Sharapov [Russian] wrote saying he had been here six months, and he thought he had seen the real America for the first time.
>
> * * * * *
>
> They are all pleasant personally, but . . .
>
> * * * * *
>
> Thursday, the Russian military gave a party and I wouldn't miss that. When we first came, they arrived early at every party and stayed late. Now they come to some and never appear at others. Never accept or decline.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Kelly moans a little over all the places we go, but he really likes it.[24]

One younger member of the Turner staff wrote that:

RKT and United Kingdom's Lieutenant General Morris were the only

[22] RKT to AES, letter, 8 Apr. 1946.
[23] Ballentine.
[24] HST to LLT, letters, 27 Mar. 1946, 11 Jul. 1946, 17 Oct. 1946.

Military Staff Committee members who 'talked turkey' to the intransigent Russians in plenary sessions.[25]

Vice Admiral Doyle relates the following:

> Gromyko was the Soviet representative on the Security Council. Gromyko made a speech about various unresolved political and military matters. The Soviets had the soft pedal on. The speech read very well. The United States members of the Military Committee got a report right after listening to the talk, that Mr. Baruch thought everything was under control and the Soviets were coming around to our position and he was about to publicly welcome Gromyko's speech.
>
> Admiral Turner quoting letter and verse, advised Mr. Baruch that the phrases used by Gromyko were not inconsistent with positions and purposes which the Soviet had advocated previously using different words which were nearly 100% the opposite of ours, and that Gromyko's speech was merely a lesson in semantics. Mr. Baruch accepted the advice, which turned out to be correct.[26]

At another time, Vice Admiral Doyle recalled:

> Admiral Turner was really wonderful in dealing with the Russians at the U.N. The Russians were full of speeches which while appearing to yield on a point, in fact, hidden somewhere was a statement directly to the contrary. They were, also full of talk about dialectic materialism and other cant—which no one but Admiral Turner understood initially.
>
> Admiral Turner was wonderful in spotting their contradictions. It was just like solving a crossword puzzle for him. He recognized all the trick phrases.
>
> Turner requested my service at the U.N. I was pleased. He was not easy to serve with, but I think he was one of our all-time Navy Greats; great virtues overshadowed his faults.[27]

MAKING ALLIES OF ENEMIES

During this period, Admiral Turner was a firm supporter of the policy of restoring Germany and Japan to a position in the family of nations and seeking to gain their support in trying to produce a more peaceable world. He strongly admired the willingness of the individual citizen of these countries to do a real day's work, and he admired the great technical ability of the Germans.[28]

[25] Morton.
[26] J. H. Doyle.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] Staff Interviews.

Admiral Turner was far from being letter perfect in understanding basic communist doctrines when he went to the United Nations, but he read assiduously while he was there. He came away with the basic conclusion that the world was in for another Hundred Years War in the political and ideological fields, with the Soviets bringing every resource to bear to conquer the world through communization. In his retirement years he could not understand why the American people would not take the time to learn that the basic mission of the Soviets everywhere was to advance the progress of communism, and that any tactic or crime fitted into their moral structure, as long as it advanced their cause in the world.[29]

INTELLECTUAL FRUSTRATIONS

One of Admiral Turner's great frustrations at the United Nations Headquarters arose from the fact that always before when he had done planning work, it was done with the anticipation that the plans would lead to some real accomplishment. At the United Nations, he soon found that elaborate planning was frequently not even associated with a faint hope of accomplishing anything.

One co-working planner with Kelly Turner during an earlier period said, "Kelly Turner was thoroughly honest" in his planning and "you could be sure that any proposal Kelly made would be solid." But, the certain veto of his planning efforts by the Soviets was the height of intellectual frustration for Admiral Turner.[30]

The United States ended up World War II with a lot of military power and with a reasonable desire, among its top officials at least, to exercise it through the United Nations. It was most frustrating to Admiral Turner to witness the very real limitations which existed on the exercise of this power on a world-wide basis through the United Nations. Even worse, it was frustrating to witness the dissipation of our military power due to lack of any great interest in its use or maintenance by the American people.[31]

SPEECH-MAKING

An examination of the official record shows that Admiral Turner received 14 sets of temporary additional duty speech-making travel orders during his

[29] Turner.
[30] Interview with Vice Admiral Vincent R. Murphy, USN (Ret.), 1 May 1961.
[31] Turner.

12 months on duty in New York with the United Nations and that, in addition, he was called upon to make a lot of speeches within the New York area to widely-differing audiences. These did not call for "official travel."

One of his staff officers wrote:

> To my knowledge, his speeches were invariably his own. He would ask us for background material and proofreading, but the words were his own, meticulously edited and re-edited by himself.[32]

An effective Flag Secretary kept the text of many of these speeches and the newspaper clippings relating thereto. The primary subject was the United Nations. Reading them today, it is clear that Admiral Turner hoped the United Nations would do far more to ensure world peace than it has accomplished in fact.

One newspaper reaction to one of his speeches is quoted from its editorial column.

> Warriors Voice Plea For Peace
>
> We regard it as a triumph for common-sense that during the last week two relatively important military events have taken place in Detroit without the rattling of one saber or the making of one jingoistic speech.
>
> Admiral R. Kelly Turner, who came here to keynote the Navy Day celebration, is a sailor with a battle record which awes even those of his own rank and profession.
>
> *But the only battle cry which he sounded in Detroit was a call for greater earnestness, and willingness to sacrifice by the citizenry, on behalf of the new national policies and ideals which are embodied in the belief that we can work through UN toward world peace.*
>
> He appealed for a strong national military policy. Yet in so doing, he refrained from dwelling on war dangers to the United States or bringing into question the designs of other nations.
>
> As he explained it, we have made a compact with other powers under UN Charter to work for certain objectives, the prime one being universal peace. The compact specifies four major military obligations on the part of the co-operating states.
>
> In Turner's words: 'At present the United States does not have the strength to fulfill its treaty obligations. The failure on our part to carry our full military load will place heavier burdens on other states, will disturb any political equilibrium which may have been based on our expected national capabilities, and will delay the return of the world to stable conditions.'
>
> * * * * *
>
> It is highly significant that this same question, whether lack of interest in the American citizenry and the unwillingness of our people to yield private

[32] Morton.

objectives to the larger aims of the nation was not becoming the chief block to peace, was raised in the national convention of ex-officers, the Military Order of World Wars.

Every action taken by the convention was consistent with this spirit of self-searching.

The sense of the body was that we need a new inner conviction that peace is attainable if we of the United States can give more to the making of it, and cure ourselves first, before pointing the finger at others.

We believe that in standing firm on that ground, the ex-officer society is showing the way to the nation.[33]

As his wife noted in her letters to his sister:

Kelly is very busy making speeches.

* * * * *

Kelly flew to Washington this afternoon to testify before the Senate Naval Affairs Committee on reorganization. He worked so hard on his statement over the weekend.

* * * * *

Kelly is to make a Memorial Day Speech in Summit: Tuesday he spoke in New York at the Naval Graduates' luncheon.[34]

There is no evidence from Soviet contemporaries of Admiral Turner's impact on the Military Committee at the United Nations. But one civilian co-worker provides a pleasant note. At the time of Admiral Turner's death, the President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Joseph E. Johnson, wrote to Miss Lucile Turner as follows:

Fifteen years ago, as a relatively junior State Department Officer, I served on the U.S. Delegation to the U.N. working in the security field. I had the great privilege of seeing a good deal of your brother in my work, and came to admire him greatly. He was always most kind and friendly to me, and I count it one of the privileges of my life to have had that opportunity to know one of our great war leaders, who was also a very human gentleman.

One of the members of the naval staff during this UNO period of Admiral Turner's service, in commenting on him, mentioned:

The respect he earned (senior or junior, U.S. or foreign, civilian or military) by his brilliant mind, wide experience, and ability to express his ideas. To all, he was a gentleman.

He was a stickler for detail, but we all respected his keen mind. Doyle, Harris and Lewis were his strong men as they had served with him afloat. Knoll's thinking was used by RKT with great effect because of Knoll's

[33] *The Detroit News* Editorial Page, Tuesday, 29 October 1946.
[34] HST to LTT, various letters, 1946.

knowledge of the Russians and their language. By 1946, the RKT we had all heard of as a martinet etc., had considerably mellowed and was loved by his staff.[35]

RETIREMENT PROSPECTS

Following World War II, under the urging of Secretary Forrestal, new legislation was enacted by the Congress lowering the statutory age retirement for all naval officers from 64 years to 62 years. This new requirement meant that Admiral Turner would be retired on 1 June 1947, and orders directing him to take a final physical examination before retirement were issued by the Bureau of Naval Personnel on 22 January 1947.

In mid-February 1947, Admiral Turner proceeded to the Naval Hospital, Saint Albans, New York, to receive his retirement physical examination. The doctors turned him in at the hospital for treatment of his arthritis, which was tormenting his back and neck. At the end of a month, a Medical Survey Board recommended that he appear before the Naval Retiring Board, which he did on 1 April 1947.

In view of the probable need for an early replacement at the United Nations, the Bureau of Naval Personnel got busy with finding a relief, and designated Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, who currently commanded our Naval Forces in Europe, with Headquarters in London. Admiral Turner was relieved by Admiral Hewitt, a class senior to him at the Naval Academy but nearly two years younger, on 31 March 1947, after just fifteen months in this interesting but frustrating detail at the United Nations.

At his retirement physical, Admiral Turner stated that he had suffered from "cricks in his neck" since before he was a midshipman, and with passage of years this had developed into arthritis with a vengeance. A letter to his mother way back in 1906 supports this medical history.

> Some way or other, I got a crick in my neck, and have scarcely been able to use my right arm. It is an old trouble that I never told you much about. The last year in Stockton, I hurt my neck a little in a football game. Sleeping in a bad position brings it on. This is the worst I've ever had it.[36]

With the passage of the years and the strain of war, these cricks, augmented by strong arthritic pains, particularly in his back, had visibly affected

[35] Morton.

[36] RKT to "My Dear Mother," letter, 7 Jan. 1906.

the Admiral's locomotion. Despite the fact that he wore a back brace, he no longer stood ramrod straight or moved quickly and easily.

> Yet, despite his aches and pains, Admiral Turner worked right up to the day the whistle blew on his retirement. He wrote very well, worked with pencil. He had the greatest admiration for Admiral Spruance, and for Admiral Nimitz and Savvy Cooke. They were, as he used to say, 'People that he could work with, no problems.' [37]

Although Admiral Turner reached 62 on 22 May 1947, it was 1 July 1947, before he was actually placed on the retired list.

Admiral Turner returned to his acquired "home state" of California for his retirement years, and in his own words:

> In 1947, I bought a little place on the outskirts of Monterey (124 Soledad Drive). A surprisingly large number of Navy retired officers live here (six in my own N.A. Class) and the General Line School brings many Navy here. Of course there are many Army personnel both active and retired. I spend most of my time gardening but doing just as few useful things as possible.[38]

[37] J. H. Doyle.

[38] RKT to Audley L. Warburton, letter, 18 Jan. 1950. Allen AMR; Donavin, Harris, Hilliard, and Jukes were the 1908 classmates.

CHAPTER XXVI

The Last Long Mile

Admiral Ballentine, who was Chief of Staff at the time of Admiral Turner's retirement, wrote:

> When Admiral Turner retired, there was no ceremony, no flag hauled down. He just closed his desk and came to our apartment for cocktails, and dinner with the Navy group.[1]

Admiral Turner attained full membership in that vast faceless array of the retired citizens of America on 1 July 1947, and existed therein for nearly fourteen years.[2]

It was not quite faceless, for even retired officers of the Military Services have occasional distinctive citizen chores to perform. And Admiral Turner never dodged doing a useful chore down to the day the Navy laid him away in the Golden Gate National Cemetery alongside of Harriet Sterling Turner.

But for a centurion who had commanded legions of men, and who had said to this man "Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh," and to his servant "Do this, and he doeth it," the official retirement letter from the Secretary of the Navy was something less than a prescription for perpetual peace of mind, contentment with himself and the world. Even worse, it was not a plan for a busy tomorrow.

Public speech making, the common chore of the military great, he gradually grew to abhor. And since he had about the same glamour during the delivery of his thought-provoking speeches as Herbert Hoover or Hyman Rickover, the calls for this service gradually grew fewer and never arose from those who wished to avoid thinking about what the speaker was saying.

Admiral Turner was a powerful advocate, a skillful defense counsel, and a dangerous opponent in any small discussion group. In such gatherings, he was not one to speak cryptically. His words bludgeoned his adversaries. His

[1] Ballentine.

[2] (a) SECNAV 6312 of 21 Mar. 1947; BUNAV PERS 325-MEP-6312 of 23 May 1947; (b) Died 12 February 1961, Monterey, California.

reasoning cut straight to the marrow of the argument. He did not seek to lull others into agreement. Rarely profane, but frequently vulgar, he was a difficult man to deal with by those who could not express their thoughts instantaneously with the concise spoken word, or for those whose anger boiling point was at a relatively low degree in the argument scale.

But, when speaking to large groups, it was quite different. His policy in this regard was:

> I will not speak off hand, but must have a manuscript. The addresses I give are the result of long hard preparation, and require a lot of work.
>
> Furthermore, in my position, I am bound by a Presidential Executive Order to clear with the State Department all public statements that in any way concerns foreign policy. (This is the result of Henry Wallace's undermining speech and letter when he was Secretary of the Interior.)[3]

During a pre-speech gathering, when this writer was to make an address to the graduating class at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, and Admiral Turner was to be one of the distinguished officers on the platform, Admiral Turner was told that the 25-minute address was to be made from memory. He promptly expressed with window dressing a dim view of the proposed procedure. When the address was completed, with RKT following it closely from the master copy, his comment was:

> By God, I didn't think you could do it. I should have learned [to do] that long ago. I am a S.O.B. if I shouldn't have.

One of the things which bothered him during the War, and which continued to bother him thereafter, was the mental unpreparedness of the young American male to put his life on the line for his country. This was a recurring theme in his discussions, and in speeches before patriotic groups.

Speaking of World War II at the first Memorial Day thereafter, he said:

> Above all American young men had not been trained to fight, nor even trained to have their minds ready and eager to fight for the existence of what we love, the democratic way of life.[4]

THE PROFESSIONAL OFFICER

The first mention of Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner in the official *United States Naval Chronology, World War II,* is on Saturday, 18 July 1942, when he established and took command of Amphibious Force, South Pacific.[5]

[3] RKT to Miss L. Lucile Turner, letter, 27 Apr. 1947.

[4] R. K. Turner, Memorial Day Address Delivered at Summit, New Jersey, 30 May 1946, p. 2.

[5] Naval History Division, *United States Naval Chronology, World War II,* p. 30.

By that date, he had been around in the United States Navy some 38 years, and while the official chronology may not have noted him sooner, there was many a naval officer—both senior and junior—who had done so.

One of those who had noted him, and with whom he had worked closely during the five-month period from late December 1941, to early June 1942, was Ernest J. King. Admiral King believed in delegated authority and independent decision by subordinate commanders and operated conspicuously within the framework of this sound military principle. Few officers came under his strong approbation unless they did likewise.

Richmond Kelly Turner also believed in the principle of delegated authority. But he found it difficult to abide by the principle in practice, because as he told his subordinates in terse language from time to time, they had not done enough within the range of their own authority and independent decision to fully ensure accomplishment of the definite tasks necessary to attain a specific objective or to actively further the general mission. He then suggested or demanded that specific things be done to attain the objective.

Kelly Turner also knew that the commander should not engage in tasks which might properly be delegated to others. But whether as a captain or an admiral, Kelly Turner was apt to come up with a comprehensive solution to an ordered-from-above campaign, an operation, or just a major naval problem and reduce it to writing before his subordinates, staff or otherwise, could produce an equally comprehensive solution.

He would then call a conference, outline his solution, and ask for "better alternates," or say "What's wrong with it?" By and large, the solution presented by Kelly Turner was first-rate, perhaps the same one his subordinates had come up with. On occasion, it was obviously a better solution. When judged less desirable than other practicalities, the clear-cut advantages of an alternate plan were not always easy to formulate or present. If one had an alternate, and the guts to present it, Kelly Turner would listen.

But all the time he was listening, one could almost hear the alternate plan being dissected by the beetle-browed schoolmaster who sat there frowning at you. If it had unmistakable merit, Kelly Turner, who was always asking his subordinates for "new ideas" and "better alternates" and who worked more contentedly through his eyes than through his ears, would say: "Reduce it to writing and let me see it." That was a real victory.

Sometimes he would interrupt an exposition of an alternate solution with a biting technical, tactical, or strategic comment, or if one rose to the challenge of the "What's wrong with it?" Kelly Turner would frequently say

"That's nit picking." But this did not mean that the comment was not accepted.

The only way to become an accepted member of the Kelly Turner team was to have ideas and to be able to express them clearly and cogently; to be willing to do battle with him and to spit in his eye when it was necessary to spit. One also had to have the physical capacity to work around the clock with him or for him, being quick on the uptake during all the hours, minutes, and seconds of the interminable days of a long war.

As one young officer on his staff during the difficult days of 1942 and 1943 wrote:

> Admiral Turner loved nothing better than to engage j.o.'s in a debate and to mentally joust with them. They loved and respected him as few men are respected. We soon learned to speak up and defend our point of view. The first sign of vacillation or uncertainty could be catastrophic. I served as his diarist for about three months. He could recall more about ships and troop movements from a quick glance at the morning message board than I could after several hours of preparation and writing.[6]

Another, currently a special assistant in Buddhist affairs in the Department of State, wrote:

> I recall Admiral Turner not only as a brilliant strategist, an indefatigable and exacting staff officer, but also as a man of remarkable literary expression: fine prose style would be reflected in his dispatches and, as a student of Japanese literature and military history, I took pride in that we had a highly cultured commander who could equal the literary accomplishments of the traditional Japanese military commander, and also surpass him at the military campaign![7]

As one participant in planning conferences during 1944 and 1945 put it:

> During a planning conference on UDT operations for Saipan, RKT knew more about UDTs than I did, more about communications than the Communication Officer, more about gunfire than the Gunnery Officer. He knew the results he wanted, knew how to get those results, and knew how to keep casualties low. This latter never left his mind.
>
> Kelly Turner dreamed up the plan for the underwater demolition teams to do their chores with heavy gun support at Saipan. So I dreamed up the idea of borrowing a battleship to practice it at Kahoolawe. I harassed the PHIBFOR staff with no luck. Finally got in to the Admiral. He agreed not only to give me one battleship but to give me three for practice.
>
> I attended a Task Force conference on the tentative communication plan—

[6] Captain H. D. Linscott, (SC), USN (Ret.) to GCD, letter, 5 May 1969.

[7] Lieutenant Colonel Richard A. Gard, USMCR (Ret.) to GCD, letter, 29 May 1969.

because of the importance of communications to the underwater demolition teams.

During the conference, the Admiral rewrote the communication plan. I walked out of the conference with the Staff Communication Officer. He was obviously upset. He said to me: 'I'm upset—not because he threw my plan out, but because he produced a better one.'

You always got a hearing. Maybe an abrasive hearing, but a hearing.[8]

A former officer on the Amphibious Force Staff wrote:

I joined Admiral Turner at Kwajalein en route to the invasion of Saipan. I am afraid I wasn't very much of a success as a staff officer in that first invasion. In fact, Kelly gave me a set of duodenal ulcers as big as walnuts in the first six weeks. The day after the island was secured, he sent me back to Aiea hospital. I felt in disgrace because I had not been able to stand the pace.

Here's where most people misunderstood Kelly. He had a hard, rough exterior but inside he was soft as a grape. He sent for me just before I left the ship and gave me a new book his wife, Harriet, had sent to him to read. He had arranged for my transportation and comfort as a father might for a son. Furthermore, he said if I could get well by the time he returned to Pearl Harbor, the job of Flag Secretary was mine.

* * * * *

Released I was, and thus embarked upon an adventure with Kelly for the rest of the war. It was my job to physically gather and get typed the plans for the invasion of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. This job encompassed nagging the Heads of Departments to get their own parts of the plan in for evaluation and approval by the Admiral. Here again I was to witness the sheer brilliance of this man as a strategist and as a writer. There was no one on the staff who could touch him when it came to putting down on paper ideas, whether they were other people's ideas or his own. Usually, they were a combination of the two.

He was impatient with delay, with slovenly work, with staff officers who didn't produce according to his standards. Those staff officers, like Charlie Horne, his communicator, and Jack Taylor, his gunnery officer, who learned what he wanted and produced according to his time table, he adored and would boast about to all and sundry. When he had confidence in an officer, it was very difficult to shake that confidence.

* * * * *

This was true of Commodore Theiss, a lovable man not noted for his quickness in making a decision. I don't know how many times instead of relieving him as requested by the Bureau, Kelly would go back with a message insisting that Theiss be immediately promoted to Rear Admiral.

[8] Interview with Rear Admiral Draper L. Kauffman, USN, Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy, 9 Dec. 1965. Hereafter Kauffman.

Loyalty to subordinates who performed according to his standards was a long suit of Admiral Kelly Turner.

* * * * *

It was his custom at sea to rise at 4 o'clock in the morning and begin work. By 7 o'clock his orderly would have made three or four trips to my room and the Lord knows how many to other staff officers' cabins. Each time he came, he would have a note—'Do this, do that, or why haven't you done this or done that.' By breakfast time my day's work was always outlined with Kelly's 'snowflakes' as we called them. The hell of it was, he was usually right and you couldn't get mad at him because you had to recognize that he was smarter than you were and way ahead of you in his far-ranging thinking.

I remember one time when he was a guest in my home after the war, he came down for breakfast one morning roaring with laughter and exclaiming at the top of his voice: 'It's a forgery. I never said it. It's a forgery.' I had forgotten that in the guest room where he was sleeping I had a framed snowflake which said simply 'My mistake—R. K. Turner.' It was one of the few times I was able to prove to him that I was right and he was wrong. Furthermore, he had acknowledge his mistake. I had had it framed. Happily, he enjoyed the joke as much as I did.[9]

A classmate of Kelly Turner's and a most distinguished fighting commander in his own right, said:

Turner rode rough shod over other people and their opinions, but he was bright enough to pick their brains and use the best amongst their proposals. . . . He was intolerant of others.[10]

A subordinate who differed strongly but not bitterly with Kelly Turner opined:

Kelly Turner was a driver. He knew no other way. He believed in kicking people around. He was an intellectual snob. He started kicking me around and I resented it. Transport commanders were more afraid of Kelly than they were of the Japs. Marines were bitter against Kelly Turner because they were bossed around. Kelly got results.[11]

Kelly Turner was a "Can Do" officer, and "Kelly Can Do" was the unofficial motto that many subordinates in their more relaxed moments adopted for the Amphibious Forces. He surrounded himself purposefully with "Can Do" subordinates.

As one very distinguished subordinate put it:

In my opinion RKT was the #1 operational Naval Commander of the

[9] Mott.
[10] Kinkaid.
[11] Compton, 17 Jun. 1969.

> Pacific War. Knew what was needed, got it. In command at all times. Very brilliant and very forceful. Superb 'boss' to work for, despite his driving and needling. Very conscious at all times of his responsibility to win the war with *absolute minimum personnel* loss. This latter always was his very heavy personal load.[12]

By the time Kelly Turner had reached his mid-forties, he had found worth in the officer class virtue of personal "wantlessness," the basic ingredient of the old German General Staff. This particularly applied to (a) personal monetary matters, (b) the full weekly operating schedules of naval ships, and (c) the concomittant separation of naval families.

He believed that one of the virtues of the German General Staff had been its small size and, like Admiral King and Admiral Spruance, he fostered a very small and consequently constantly vastly overworked staff, particularly in the early days of World War II.

The Marine Colonel with long service on Kelly Turner's staff who was quoted by Leif Erickson as saying of Turner, "He's a mean S.O.B. but I love him," has been identified as Colonel H. D. Linscott. General Robert E. Hogaboom, USMC, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps prior to retirement, made the same remark to this writer, except in the past tense and added: "He was a tough perfectionist." [13]

THE STRATEGIST

Admiral John L. Hall made this assessment:

> Turner was the best strategist in the Navy, in my opinion. I formed that opinion at the War College when I was a student and he was in charge of that department, and it was confirmed during the War.[14]

From having served on Admiral King's staff at the beginning and again at the end of World War II, this quill driver can testify to the high opinion Admiral King had of Kelly Turner's strategic thinking. Admiral Nimitz, while disagreeing with his subordinate upon occasion, expressed his high opinion of his strategic thinking in the fitness reports which he rendered upon Admiral Turner. Admiral Turner's greatest interest lay in this field. Few who ever served closely with him fail to remember how he plumbed

[12] Kauffman.

[13] Leif Erickson, Pearl Harbor AP Story, *San Francisco Examiner*, 23 January 1944.

[14] Admiral John Leslie Hall, USN, (Ret.) to GCD, letter, 1 Nov. 1961. Hall relieved RKT as Head of Strategy Section, Naval War College.

their strategic thinking from time to time. It was a professional hobby which paid off in his detail in 1940 to the War Plans desk. It created an attentive ear in his superiors, as he moved along.

Admiral Turner viewed the war as a whole and he viewed the operation he was engaged in as a whole. He was concerned, but never scared about what the Japanese might do to his attacking forces. He drove through to the objective without fear or favor, not forgetting that he didn't like to see soldiers swim.

A distinguished Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, and one who had many a verbal bout with Kelly Turner during the Guadalcanal campaign, said he was "explosively competent" and "never a man to miss a trick or neglect a lesson." [15]

A much younger officer mentioned Kelly Turner's habit of introspection. He said:

> I always had the opportunity of talking with the Admiral when each campaign was over and done. He would say 'These are the mistakes I made during the last operation.' He didn't say the mistakes made by the Transport Commander or the Gun Support Commander, but the ones 'I made.' [16]

Admiral Turner believed that a military leader must know, must know that he knows, and must make it clear to all hands that he knows. Once his subordinates, by their own judgments over a period of time and during a series of events, come to accept this, then they are happy to join with the leader, putting forth their best efforts to make the joint venture a success. Admiral Turner believed that it was seldom that one person could make a major success. Success came from the joint efforts of many.

THE PERSONAL MAN

Kelly Turner was not a back slapper, a "jolly fellow" given to light bantering or smutty jokes, but was ready at the drop of the hat to discuss for long periods most any naval, political, technical or historical subject.

He was not a naval "Green Bowler," a schemer, or a naval bureaucrat, but he was highly conscious of the need of friends at all levels of the naval Service, and an exponent of the naval truism "you can't have a better assignment, than your friends who are your seniors, wish you to have."

Kelly Turner, by nature, was a loyal man. But his deep desire for perfec-

[15] Vandegrift, *Once a Marine*, p. 292.
[16] Kauffman.

tion in all he was interested in meant that his loyalty encompassed intelligent comment or criticism of his country, his Navy, his superiors, and his subordinates.

He thought that a great deal of the wisdom of the world had been committed to the written words, and that much of this wisdom could be absorbed by an alert mind through reading and study.

For many years of his Service life, Kelly Turner was a living example and on occasional exponent of the modern version of the Spartan ideals of the officer class. He believed in naval officers giving strict attention to the Navy's business and that they should seek a strong physical body kept in tune by regular physical exercise which would permit long hours of first-rate duty performance.

Kelly Turner was blessed with a marvelous memory. As General Hogaboom stated:

> His memory was great and retentive of tremendous detail. Amphibious Operation orders were lengthy and in great detail, but once he had prepared one, he rarely had to refer to it. An example of the sort of information he carried around in his head was the number, dimensions and cube of just about every piece of equipment in a Marine Division.[17]

THE TURNER-SMITH TEAM

As one of the younger officers on his staff wrote to Admiral Turner in 1948:

> Many times as a staff duty officer, I had been close aboard when you and Holland Smith discussed the tactical situation, and I had the feeling, invariably, that here was the perfect team, each member complementing the other in his own peculiar fashion, but usually coming up with a touchdown play.[18]

General Hogaboom, who had served both of these capable officers, wrote:

> This was a rare team. They were both tough and aggressive fighters. With reserved contempt for faults they detected in each other, there was mutual recognition of their respective strengths and talents.
>
> General Smith, though tough, was generally relaxed and easygoing, but with a tense, hard driving aggressive Chief of Staff. Admiral Turner, tough and tense was essentially without a Chief of Staff. This Turner-Smith combination was quite a combination. The running fight was generally in the grey area of command relationships.

[17] Hogaboom Interview, 15 Mar. 1967.

[18] Charles W. Weaver, Ed., *Evening Express,* Portland, Me., to RKT, letter, 6 Nov. 1948.

> Prior to the Marianas, there was a real battle over who was to command the Reserve (27th Infantry Division). This was finally taken to Admiral Spruance. I was present at the conference. Admiral Spruance listened quietly as each strongly presented his case, then quietly announced his decision (the Landing Force Reserve would be under the Landing Force Commander), got up and walked out. Admiral Turner accepted the decision completely and the question was never in doubt thereafter.

Lieutenant General Holland Smith, when the chips were about to be put down at Iwo Jima, and in the presence of the Secretary of the Navy and assembled Marine and Naval personnel, said for all to hear and record:

> In Admiral Turner we have full confidence—we would rather go to sea with him in command than any other admiral under whom we have served.[19]

This was a bit of a left-handed compliment, but from "Howlin Mad" Smith, a real Valentine.

RELIGIOUS ASPECTS

Kelly Turner was not a church-going man, nor a formal religionist. Like most of those who go to sea for many years, he gave full acceptance to a God who ruled over wind and wave and who had a personal interest in all who ventured into the boundless oceans. He had a strong belief that this was a world overseen and guided by a great and good God. He quite honestly and openly called upon this God in a perfectly frank way, as in this November 1942 message to his amphibians:

> No medals however high can possibly give you the reward you deserve. With all my heart, I say 'God Bless the courageous men dead and alive of Task Force 67.' [20]

Among his personal papers was this modified version of the Navy Hymn as written during World War II by one of the many God-fearing officers serving in the amphibious Navy.

PRAYER HYMN
For Our
AMPHIBIOUS FORCES

On Sea and Land, and in the Air.
Eternal Father! strong to save,

[19] Quoted in Robert Lee Sherrod, *On to Westward War in the Central Pacific* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1945), p. 159.
[20] CTF 67 to TF 67, 142000 Nov. 1942.

Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

Creator! who dost from above
Observe Thy sons with eyes of love,
Who canst preserve where'er they be
Our men who fight for home and Thee;
O put Thou forth a guiding hand,
For those in peril on the land.

Almighty! who cans't from on high
Protect our fliers in the sky
And guide each pilot in his plane
The length and breadth of Thy domain;
O hearken to our fervent prayer,
For those in peril in the air.

O Trinity of love and power!
Our forces shield in danger's hour;
From peril, onslaught, fire and foe
Protect them where-so-e'er they go;
Thus ever may there rise to Thee
Glad hymns from air and land and sea.

– -Version by Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN (1915)

The only philosophical note among Admiral Turner's papers was an extract, hand copied by him from *The Duel* by Joseph Conrad. This reads as follows:

> No man succeeds in everything he undertakes. The great point is not to fail in ordering and sustaining the effort of our life. In this matter, vanity is what leads us astray. It hurries us into situations from which we must come out damaged, whereas pride is our safeguard, by the reserve it imposes on our choice of our endeavors as much as by the virtue of its sustaining powers.

Kelly Turner had his sentimental moments. As a past midshipman, in the cruiser *West Virginia*, he wrote:

> It has been my best Service Christmas, though it wasn't like being at home. There were sixteen at our table, which was covered with greenery, and our Christmas tree in the center with a little toy for everybody in the mess and the guests. The walls and decks overhead were covered with greens and with flags. It was all very pretty. But the best feature was the fireplace that we built. You know a Christmas doesn't seem real without a fireplace, so out of

lattice and papers we constructed a huge one, the paper painted to represent bricks, and on the hearth an artificial fire made of electric lights underneath red bunting. It looked very homelike with most of the lights turned out.

* * * * *

However far one gets away the rest of the year, one wants home and Mother on Christmas.[21]

FAMILY LIFE

During the early years of their marriage, Mrs. Turner suffered from a troublesome illness labeled "the colic." Ensign and Lieutenant (jg) Turner's letters to his mother and sister are full of legitimate worry and concern in regard to the health of his wife.

Kelly Turner's love and devotion to his wife continued throughout his life. His wife did not have robust health in either her earlier or her later years.

One day, I am allright and the next can hardly move. . . . I always feel allright at night.[22]

* * * * *

When we left New York, Harriet was in bad shape . . . driving makes her very tired.[23]

For a man whose fury and rage made strong men quake, it is a bit surprising to read in Kelly Turners letters of his "blessed lamb," "sweet little girl," and similar expressions.

As noted previously, those of the Class of 1908 who were on duty together in the *California* in 1922–1923 were Lieutenant Commanders Turner, H. F. D. Davis, and Ernest W. McKee. The McKees, Davises, and Turners became intimate friends during their *California* cruise, and remained so during the many, many years following.

McKee, the last of the *California* trio alive, described his classmate, Kelly Turner, as:

A brain, a very fast reader, a thorough worker, completely honest, meticulous financially. When Kelly said something, he said it because he believed it. There was no sham, never an effort to deceive. He was very intolerant of the second-rate mentally. He loved the Navy. It came first in his thinking.[24]

[21] RKT to Mother, letter, Dec. 1909.
[22] Mrs RKT to Miss LLT, letter, 17 Oct. 1946.
[23] RKT to Miss LLT, letter, 27 Apr. 1947.
[24] Interview with Captain Ernest W. McKee, USN (Ret.), 13 Mar. 1964.

Mrs. McKee added:

> Harriet was a marvelous cook and a great walker. Harriet, when she was young, never wanted to be in a position where she was handicapped physically and that's my guess as to why the Kelly Turner's never had any children.
>
> Harriet also was a great reader. In their last years, she watched over Kelly like a hawk and tried to reduce or eliminate his drinking. She wouldn't let him keep any liquor in the house, so he hid it in the garden tool house.
>
> Kelly had a green thumb, with everything. He loved to work in his garden, and he worked at the garden like he worked at everything else—furiously. His back hurt him constantly, but still he worked. He wouldn't let anyone pick his New Zealand spinach, which was out of this world, but Harriet spent a lot of effort trying to give away the quantities of other vegetables, fruits and flowers he grew—marvelous apples, wonderful roses; everything. Even the deer used to find the garden at night and eat things up.
>
> When his heart started acting up, and he had to cut down on the gardening in order to continue to live, that really hurt him.
>
> Harriet's sister married a Navy doctor—George P. Carr.[25]

As far as can be determined, the Turners had many, many acquaintances and admirers, but a limited number of intimate friends. By and large, they were sufficient unto themselves and did not need a large amount of company to keep happy. Admiral Bieri recalled:

> He was a man of high character. He and his wife seemed to be devoted and constant companions when he was free of official duties. While they participated in many of the social events current, they spent much time in their home and with their intimate friends. Both were avaricious readers.[26]

The hundreds of letters held by the family attest to the fact that Kelly Turner was a good family correspondent—and that there was a deep and affectionate relationship between him and his brothers and sisters.

THE TURNER FAMILY AND THE TURNER DOGS

Harriet Turner's interest in life other than her husband was her Lhasa dogs. Her letters are full of the never-ending succession of their illnesses and recent progeny. There is no question that she lavished on them the same affection which most women give to their children and grandchildren.

"Hinie sleeps right by me every night." [27]

[25] (a) Interview with Mrs. E. W. McKee, 13 Mar. 1964; (b) Lieutenant Commander George P. Carr, (MC), died on 30 October 1932.

[26] Bieri.

[27] Mrs. RKT to Miss LLT, letter, 17 Oct. 1946.

At the time this scribe visited Admiral Turner in his home the year before he died, his beloved wife Harriet was in bed much of each day and slowly dying of cancer.

Mrs. Turner told me that there were just two earthly things which her condition justified her wishing for, before she died. One was to live long enough to observe her fiftieth wedding anniversary, and the other was to live long enough to vote for Richard Nixon. The wedding anniversary was observed on 3 August 1960, the vote was cast on 1 November 1960, and Harriet Turner died on 3 January 1961.

Of the funeral occasion, a 1908 classmate wrote:

> Yesterday we saw Kelly for an hour. Though visibly sad, he did not break down, nor would we have expected him to do so. Rugged and tough, a man who never asked for quarter, but frequently gave it, his upper lip was stiff and his courage sublime. And all this with his whole system ridden with arthritis, a steel brace without which I doubt if he could walk. Kelly Turner had these qualities from the first day we knew him.[28]

Kelly Turner's retirement years held no emptiness until his wife died.

SENSE OF HUMOR

Kelly Turner had a wry sense of humor at times.

When this writer was having one of his annual physical examinations, and the medical officer was making small talk as he proceeded from here to there, the doctor elicited the information that this factual study was being worked on, and in answer to a question as to whether the doctor had ever served with Admiral Turner, he said: "No, but I know a story about him told to me by a doctor who did serve with Admiral Turner." The story ran as follows:

> While Admiral Turner was serving at the United Nations, the routine for the annual physical examinations for all Flag Officers was amplified to include a prostate finger wave and smear. After the Doctor had conducted this examination he said 'Now Admiral . . .' Admiral Turner broke in and said 'Now that you know so much about me, just call me Kelly.'

A Captain in the Navy who was young enough to be a caddy on the golf course when Captain Turner was on the Staff at the Naval War College, relates this story:

[28] Lieutenant Commander Harry K. Donavin, USNR (Ret.), to Rear Admiral Edward J. Foy, USN, Secretary, Class 1908, letter.



Turner Collection

Admiral Turner visits his wartime flagship, USS Eldorado, *in September 1954.*

I never knew any other golfer who regularly actually talked to his golf ball. Captain Turner talked to his golf ball frequently in very uncomplimentary terms, but he also pled with it, cajoled it, and occasionally praised it. He might walk up to his ball and say: 'Why you S.O.B., why did you pick out such a stinking lie? Now this time—head right up for that pin. Keep out of that g.d. trap.' He played a good game of golf, but a very serious game.[29]

General Hogaboom wrote:

I was never able to detect much of a sense of humor in Admiral Turner. On social occasions, he could be genial and gracious, but I never saw him relax into warm, happy, good humor. With his staff and subordinates, he was serious, tense and pressing.

I believe it was at Kwajalein that a hard pressed troop unit was calling for gunfire very close to the plotted troop position. The Gunnery Officer was reluctant to open fire, so close to the forward lines, and came to the Admiral. Admiral Turner immediately took the voice radio and talked directly to the young naval gunfire officer on the beach. The Admiral said: 'This is Buckeye, Buckeye himself. Can you see the forward lines?'

[29] Interview with Captain Frank A. Andrews, USN, May 1962.

The reply came: 'Sir, I can p--s on the forward lines.'
Without a word or a smile, the Admiral turned and said: 'Open fire.'

A FAIR SHAKE

Kelly Turner strongly believed that every officer deserved a full opportunity to prove his worth. For this reason, first interviews with him were nearly always pleasant. His schoolmaster appearance, and his ability and desire to explore the professional and mental capabilities of those he was meeting, provided a real purpose in his mind to the occasion, and in a very pleasant way, he made the most of it.

General Holland McTyeire Smith, U. S. Marine Corps, described it this way:

> On first meeting, he suggests the exacting schoolmaster, almost courtly in courtesy. He is precise, affable in an academic manner, and you are tempted in the first five minutes of acquaintance to make the snap judgment that he is a quiet, softly philosophic man. Nothing could be further from the truth.[30]

Another Marine described him as follows:

> I had known Turner when he was a Navy planner in Washington. A lanky chap, who wore steel rimmed glasses, he resembled an erudite school teacher, whose didactic manner proved irritating to some people. . . .[31]

Perhaps General Vandegrift used "didactic" in its third dictionary sense: "Too much inclined to teach others." For the whole Department of the Navy was Kelly Turner's school, and that included the Marines.

A subordinate, the skipper of the *Wacky Mac* (the *McCawley*) who fought through a fair share of the Pacfiic War with him, wrote:

> During the Solomon's Island Campaigns, Turner shared the bridge and my cabin with me countless hours, and even days. Countless times we faced certain destruction together. The long vigils—in which Turner talked to me about every subject under the sun—and he knew about them all—were a part of my life, I can never forget.[32]

Another subordinate wrote:

> Twenty-five years later, 1943, I came under Kelly's command when he had the Amphibious Force in the South Pacific and I had command of LST Flotilla 5.

[30] Smith, *Coral and Brass,* p. 109.

[31] Vandegrift, *Once a Marine,* p. 119.

[32] Rear Admiral Robert H. Rodgers, formerly Commanding Officer USS *McCawley* (APA-4), to GCD, letter, 29 Nov. 1965. Hereafter Rodgers.

> I will never forget when I first reported to him. He put me at ease at once, and I fell in love with the guy.
>
> The same qualities of industry and intelligence that were present in 1918 were of course more so in 1943, but tempered with maturity. His mien and manner had a tinge of graciousness. You felt his personality at once and realized full well that your chances for the white alley under his guidance were a damned sight better than ever.
>
> Here I discovered his personal magnetism, absent, so I thought in 1918. The rare and wonderful form that is backed and fortified by peerless ability in deed and action.
>
> You always knew where you stood with R. K. Turner. It was either damn good, or no damn good. Such went for friend or foe, junior or senior, the latter spared not at all. As T. B. Brittain, on an occasion when we were talking together about Turner, so aptly said 'equivocation was not in the man's makeup.' [33]

There were many who thought and said that Kelly Turner was tough and some said that he was a martinet. To the first charge Admiral Turner himself quickly pleaded "guilty," saying that combat leaders must be tough. Historians may seek combat leaders who are not tough, but few who have felt frequently the strange vacuum of passing shells, or watch dive bombers or kamikazes zero in on their ship or formation, want leaders other than tough leaders. Thus Admiral William F. Halsey was quoted in the newspapers as saying:

> If you want something tough done, call on Turner.[34]

As to being a martinet—a stickler for rigid regulations or a strict disciplinarian—the opinion of the vast majority of the hundreds interviewed by the author in this nine-year endeavor is distinctly "no." For example Rear Admiral Hurst wrote:

> My personal contacts with Admiral Turner were most pleasant during the many landing operations from the Gilberts thru the Marianas. I was flattered on several occasions when he sent for me and asked my opinions and recommendations on various uses and operations of LSTs. I can truthfully say I admired and respected him very much. He, in turn, always treated me with respect and consideration.
>
> Admiral Turner had a reputation as a tough task master and that probably was true in the case of those officers who didn't perform or carry their weight. As an instance of his 'loyalty down' I might mention that I was passed over on the first time my class came up for Captain and when this was called to his attention by Captain Robert Bolton, he personally wrote to Admiral

[33] G. B. Carter. (T. B. Brittain is now Vice Admiral, USN (Ret.).
[34] *The Evening Star,* 13 Feb. 1961; *Washington Post,* 14 Feb. 1961.

> Nimitz stating he couldn't understand it and that I 'was an excellent combat officer and should be promoted.' I was, on the next go round.[35]

Another subordinate wrote:

> Turner was a most complex character. He could love one day and murder the next. But he had a single purpose—'To get on with the war.' Turner's commands were out of the ordinary only in their 'will to win' and 'can-do-attitude.' He had a fabulous memory, a keen and alert mind and was the most decisive of all naval officers. Once in a planning conference in regard to Underwater Demolition Teams I asked for and got eleven major decisions in twenty minutes.[36]

There were even a few who did not think Kelly Turner was tough.

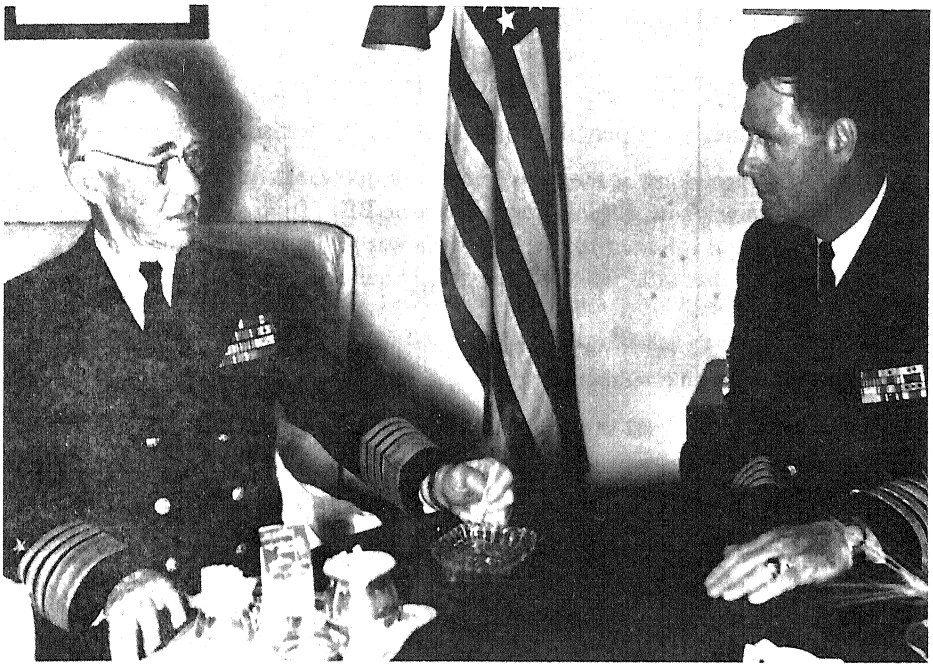
> Another puncture in the myth about his toughness; when I was detached at Pearl in 1940, he came to the gangway and told me in that stage whisper voice of his that my successor was going to have to have mighty big shoes.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Our chaplain failed to show up when we were due to sail from Cavite Navy Yard for Hawaii and Puget Sound. Captain Turner delayed sailing four hours. (We were on our way home from Japan, where we had delivered Saito's ashes.) About half an hour after we were due to sail, the chaplain came rolling down the dock singing 'Hallelujah I'm a Bum.' Later, this officer felt ill-treated, when he was recommended for trial by General Court-Martial. The Turner reputation of martinet was fostered by the inefficient and inept.[37]

Like most naval officers, Kelly Turner's character developed over the years, and opinions of him varied with the particular year and circumstances of service with him. After retirement, he deteriorated. Just how much, again depends on the viewer and the year. One former shipmate remembered:

> I last met Turner in the Navy Exchange at [the] PG School, Monterey in 1954. I had a short chat with him and I had the surprise of my life. I suspected that he had half a 'snootfull' of booze in him and this was early afternoon. The surprise baffled me as to the change in the man. . . . This was a big disappointment to me, but I had knowledge that he was as strong a naval officer as anyone could know, thus my disappointment was salved somewhat.[38]

A letter to Admiral Turner from the Director of the Naval Gunfire Officers School, Marine Corps Schools, written during the Korean War, and Admiral Turner's long-hand reply, indicates that in 1952 Admiral Turner

[35] Rear Admiral Adrian M. Hurst, USN (Ret.) to GCD, letter, 9 Jan. 1966.
[36] Rodgers (Commander Underwater Demolition Teams, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet).
[37] Stratton.
[38] Lopresti.



Turner Collection

Admiral Turner and Captain R. C. Peden, USN, Commanding Officer of Eldorado, *September 1954.*

was still coming through loud and clear. Pertinent parts of the letter and the red-penciled comments to these parts are reproduced herewith:

Dear Admiral Turner:

In an article which I am preparing on the evolution of fire support coordination during the Pacific War, I have written the following passage (based on a story which had wide currency in the V Amphibious Corps in 1944–45).

'There is a story that Admiral Kelly Turner, while commanding the Joint Expeditionary Force and Southern Attack Force at Kwajalein happened to see (or thought he saw) a U. S. plane fly into U. S. gunfire or artillery and then fall in flames. From that day forth, legend says, Admiral Turner determined that some system must be devised to prevent aircraft from being unduly endangered by gunfire and artillery. Secondary to the question of safety, it seemed clear by that time we must take positive steps to eliminate undue mutual interference among the fires of air, naval gunfire, and artillery.

'At any rate, whether Admiral Turner did see that airplane fall (and whether he did swear that solemn vow) it is in the Marshall Operation that we find the first symptom of fire support coordination procedure.'

> Emboldened by reports from my friends, Bob Sherrod and Sam Morison, of much helpfulness by you in historical matters, I wonder if you would comment on this passage, and confirm, deny, elaborate, or correct.

Admiral Turner's red pencil comment on this follows:

> This happened just as the boats were about 300 yards from the beach. The plane was a seaplane, I think from one of the BBs [from the *New Mexico*]. I *did see* it and I did not like it. The plane was hit by fire from the 7th DIV Artillery, on that little island to the west [Enubuj]. [Pilot killed, radioman rescued.]
>
> There was no vow. It was no fault of any person, but after that time I tried to prevent such an eventuality.[39]

As one retirement year eroded into another, more and more of the 650,000 officers and men who were in his command when the Pacific War suddenly collapsed, vividly recalled the merit of the man and forgot the sharp tongue or the seemingly unreasonable demands. They wrote him letters of high regard and Kelly Turner said:

> They made me out to be the man I would have liked to have been.[40]

THE MOST CONSPICUOUS TRAIT

It was probably during the long Okinawa campaign that Admiral Turner's most conspicuous trait was decided upon by many. This trait was named and commented on by Rear Admiral Kauffman:

> RKT's most conspicuous trait was his irascibility. This was the most conspicuous, but not his most important trait. People who got fired by him stress the most conspicuous, rather than his most valuable trait.[41]

SWEARING WITH THE BEST OF THEM

General Washington set the standard for the American "Military Man" almost two hundred years ago when in the general order of July 1776, he wrote:

> The General is sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing, a vice hitherto little known in our American

[39] Lieutenant Colonel R. D. Heinl, USMC, Director Naval Gunfire School, to RKT, letter, 4 Feb. 1952.

[40] Turner.

[41] Kauffman.

> Army, is growing into fashion. He hopes that the officers will, by example as well as by influence, endeavor to check it and that both they and the men will reflect that we can little hope for the blessing of Heaven on our Army, if we insult it by our impiety and folly.

There can be little doubt that Kelly Turner was a frequent violator of the standard. The extent and the nature of the violations depended on the circumstance. It bothered some subordinates a good deal, but others not at all. At best, it was a distasteful habit which he did little to control. At worst, it made smaller the number of subordinates who found no wrong in Kelly Turner.

PERSONAL COURAGE

A number of Kelly Turner's shipmates remarked on his personal courage. One shipmate related:

> Admiral Turner felt a compulsion to demonstrate his courage in some dramatic way. After Tarawa, there was grave concern about Japanese anti-boat and beach mines. Admiral Turner gave a great deal of thought to these obstacles. One hopeful invention was a rake-like device mounted on a boom extended beyond the bow of an amphibious tractor. Our U.D.T. and Landing Force engineers tested it and said it would work, but troop leaders were skeptical. Admiral Turner proposed and insisted that he and I get in an amphibious tractor and put on a demonstration by driving through a mine field. I saw I could not reason with him, so I said:
>
> 'Admiral, I do not recommend you make the Japs and General Holland Smith happy by getting your stern sheets blown into the sky.'
>
> So he desisted.
>
> In his orders he would make no plans for an alternate command ship. I questioned him on this one day and he said:
>
> 'If my ship goes down, I will swim to the nearest ship and continue to command the force.' [42]

MEDALS AND CITATIONS

During the Pacific campaigns, Kelly Turner had received a large quota of decorations—a Navy Cross and four Distinguished Service Medals. He was proud of them and he cherished them. He noted with asperity that it appeared that, in some commands, political personalities had been handed

[42] Hogaboom.

out medals for routine operational tasks rather remotely connected with enemy bullets. He wished that there could have been absolute equity throughout the war in the award of medals, but in the early days of the war there weren't any real standards to judge by, and in the later days of the war, "the civilians and the shore end of the Navy got into the act" and "started pressuring for awards, so the standards were progressively lowered."

During the first years after the end of the Pacific War, Admiral Turner's correspondence was belly full with responses as he was pressured for recommendations for awards. To some he yielded gladly, to others grudgingly, and some he refused. In 1960 the whole matter bothered him, and he brought it up for discussion with this writer. He produced a letter which he had written much earlier, expressing his opinion. Part of it read:

> About the time we went into the Gilberts, Admiral King sent out a private letter stating that the policy of the Deparment was not to give officers on staffs citations unless an officer had performed some particular duty that entitled him to a citation for a specific act of personal courage, or on the occasion of the detachment of the officer or of his Commanding Officer. Since previous to that time, there had been widespread criticism of admirals for giving citations to their staff officers for ordinary staff duty during particular operations, 'I felt it necessary to adhere to that view of Admiral King.'
>
> * * * * *
>
> Now the thing has been completely upset by the shore part of the Navy.
>
> * * * * *
>
> I think somebody in the Department made a very bad mistake.[43]

THE NAVY AS A CAREER

In writing to a Naval Reserve officer who requested advice in regard to applying for a commission in the regular Navy, Admiral Turner wrote:

> For each grade to which I have been promoted, I have found that it was necessary to make good all over again, and to spend a great deal of time in careful study and thought. Reserve Officers who have been intelligent and determined enough to follow this strict course of procedure have gotten along as well as, and often better than, Naval Academy Officers.[44]

ON KEEPING THE MIND FLEXIBLE

Kelly Turner gave this sound advice on mental flexibility:

> As we grow older, we all have a tendency to become too conservative.

[43] RKT to Lieutenant Colonel Cecil W. Shuler, USMC, letter, 24 Feb. 1947.
[44] RKT to Lieutenant Commander Jack Martin, USNR, letter, 25 Jul. 1946.

> Before the War, through the War, and since, I found that I had constantly to whip myself in order to be receptive toward new ideas. It is so easy to reject new ideas, in favor of ones that we have long been used to. However, it's a very poor plan to follow, in my opinion.[45]

THE PACIFIC WAR MEMORIAL

On 26 October 1953, Admiral Turner accepted an invitation to become an honorary member of the Pacific War Memorial Commission. He wrote that:

> It surely will appeal for the support of . . . the United States and of other free Pacific Nations as a concrete expression of the noble sentiments which have inspired this great project. Particularly appealing, I think, is that the Pacific Memorial System is planned not to be primarily local to Hawaii, but national and even international in scope.[46]

The names of the more than 18,000 officers and men of the Armed Forces killed and missing in action during the Pacific War are inscribed in the Punchbowl Cemetery in Hawaii.

SPECIALTY OF THE HOUSE

Nearly every old-time naval officer over the years learned to produce a "specialty of the house," an appetizing drink that appealed to medium-sized social gatherings of shipmates' families, at homecomings after long cruises, or selection or promotion to higher rank celebrations, or during the Christmas Season.

The Kelly Turner family specialty was Christmas egg nog, and various shipmates offered the recipe. Since it's not only good, but excellent, it is worth recording, one version at least. This one comes from the recipe book of Mrs. Peg Bonney, wife of Captain Carroll T. Bonney, U. S. Navy (Retired), and dates from 1938.

EGG-NOG CAPT KELLY TURNER—1938
1 gal.—25 people (I think he meant servings)
10 eggs
10 tablespoons sugar—slightly rounded
1 qt. milk

[45] RKT to Admiral Allan E. Smith, letter, 8 Apr. 1946.
[46] RKT to H. Tucker Gratz, letter, 26 Oct. 1953.

¾ qt. cream
1 qt. liquor (1 pt. whiskey
½ pt. Jamaica rum
½ pt. brandy)
nutmeg, touch of cinnamon, allspice and salt

1. Separate eggs, beat yolks and add sugar while beating.
2. Beat in liquor *slowly*—15 min.
3. Beat in milk and cream—part of cream whipped and folded in.
4. Beat egg-whites moderately—not too stiff—and beat in.
5. Keep cool—spice lightly when served.

In a letter written on Christmas Day 1941, Kelly Turner's devoted wife wrote:

> We had a nice Xmas. Kelly worked all day.

Another Yuletide letter reported:

> I had a small egg nog party last evening. Only two men got here and Kelly never did. They had a White House meeting.[47]

KELLY'S DRINKING HABITS

This writer questioned both Fleet Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Spruance, Kelly Turner's two immediate superiors during World War II, in regard to their knowledge of his drinking habits and what their reaction to these habits had been.

Fleet Admiral Nimitz's comment was:

> In regard to Kelly Turner's drinking habits, of which I heard much during the war, I always told the tale-bearer the same thing as Lincoln is supposed to have told someone regarding General Grant: 'Please let me know what brand of whiskey Kelly's drinking so I can feed it to some of my other admirals.'
>
> I never saw Kelly Turner when he was not capable of doing his duty and thinking straight.[48]

When Admiral Spruance fielded the same question, his comment was:

> When any operation was over and Kelly returned to Pearl or Guam to plan the next one he was going to command, there always was a period when he had more than his share of liquor, after each day's working hours. The man had tremendous resilience, and the next morning his mind would be as

[47] Mrs. HST to Miss LLT, letter, 2 Jan. 1942.
[48] Interview with Fleet Admiral Nimitz, at New Canaan, Conn., 19 Oct. 1961.

sharp as a steel trap, and he would put in another long productive working day.

I always felt I could handle Kelly and his drinking. When Chester and I discussed the problem, I always told Chester to let me handle it. Chester did let me handle it. And I think I did. It never really got out of hand during the War.

I never saw him tight during working hours, except once on Guam after he had finished up at Okinawa. His breath would knock you down at 15 feet. His head was clear as a bell.[49]

As one of his Flag Captains wrote:

Turner was very tired and fatigued at the end of the war. Many persons took this for over drinking. Like Lincoln, I wished more of our commanders would have drunk Kelly's whiskey.[50]

General Hogaboom wrote:

To my knowledge, Admiral Turner never touched a drop until the fight, as far as his part of it was concerned, was over and in the bag. But once the fight was over, he became bored and took to the bottle.

While this character defect was not fatal, it did exact a price. His interest was primarily in the fight, and he drove himself without mercy until it seemed victory was clear. He neglected no detail associated with the assault. He took little or no interest in such matters as evacuation of the wounded, hospitalization, safety and welfare of boat crews and similar matters. These details he left to unrewarded subordinates and they were frequently poorly planned and little supervised in sharp contrast to the minute supervision he gave to details of the assault. He just wasn't interested.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Like all Naval officers whose only income is their monthly pay, Kelly Turner had many periods of financial stringency in the years before attaining Flag rank, and some financial problems afterward. However, he was meticulous in meeting his financial obligations. Better than that, he lived within his income, except for occasional borrowings intra-family to meet his mother's urgings over the years for him to help provide income to a brother to sustain "unremunerative artistic efforts." At one such time, he wrote:

I shall have Izer paid up by next July thank goodness, though meanwhile, I'll have to stay aboard ship all the time. Well I don't care.[51]

[49] Interview with Admiral Spruance, 6–7 Oct. 1961.

[50] Rodgers.

[51] RKT to Mother, letter, Hongkong, China, Dec. 1909.

JAPANESE NAVAL OFFICERS

Kelly Turner had one of the great Christian virtues. He could forgive his enemies. Despite all the unkind things which the Japanese radio said about him during the War, he forgave the Japanese. He thought we should become friends again. He knew and admired certain of the virtues of the Japanese, and he liked many Japanese naval officers. Up to the time of his death, he exchanged Christmas cards with about half a dozen Japanese naval officers—including Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura and Vice Admiral Yoshimori Terai. He spoke unkindly of some of the acts of individual Japanese, but not unkindly of the Japanese people.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

During the early days of the Guadalcanal campaign, Rear Admiral Turner had had little contact with the press. But his personal files during this period indicate an awareness of its existence and possible use. For example, he recommended to Vice Admiral Ghormley, when the 164th Infantry Regiment was embarked on transports for passage to duty at Guadalcanal, that as an indication of "fine inter-Service cooperation" and "the highest ideals of cooperation and unity of command," Major Generals Harmon and Patch inspect the transports *McCawley* and the *Zeilin* carrying the Army troops. He continued:

> I suggest that newspaper correspondents and newspaper photographers attend this ceremony.
>
> This suggestion is made for the purpose of giving publicity to the idea of inter-Service cooperation.[51]

On 23 December 1942, he wrote to the editor of *The Call Bulletin* in reply to a letter:

> Just before I went into Guadalcanal on our last reenforcement, I offered one young newspaperman here the chance to come along on board one of our ships and watch the show from the water side. We were delayed a couple of days; he became impatient and insisted on flying up to get on shore with our troops—and so missed a battle which in time will be a classic of naval warfare; the night action of November 12–13 which really set them on their heels.[53]

[51] RKT to RLG, letter, 8 Oct. 1942.
[53] RKT to EDC, letter, 23 Dec. 1942.

A correspondent who was in the Solomons during the preparatory phases of the TOENAILS campaign for the middle Solomons wrote:

> Admiral Turner is one who sincerely believes this is a people's war and the people should be informed about it, through press and radio. Where certain colleagues in the Silent Service have taped their mouths and gone . . . hush-hush, Admiral Turner has been generous with information, even in advance of important operations.
>
> . . . Admiral Turner . . . more than a month ahead of the New Georgia offensive, let correspondents in on the secret of D-Day so they could make necessary plans for coverage. . . . Actually we were tipped off twice—in general terms before we went up to the Solomons, and in intimate detail on a Friday afternoon at Camp Crocodile, Guadalcanal, five days before the landings on Rendova and the other islands of the New Georgia Group.
>
> . . . (Turner) looks worn and very gaunt. His sensitive face is pale and lined and marked with fatigue. His speech is slow and slangy. His unpressed khaki is open at the throat. He smokes cigarettes thriftily to the cork tip, and he alternates two cigarette lighters, one gold, the other black G.I. . . .[54]

Until Rear Admiral Turner learned that Congressional approval of his promotion to Vice Admiral was being held up in the Senate, because of what had appeared in the public press in regard to his actions at Guadalcanal and at Tarawa, he was not conscious that he was getting what is called "a bad press." He was as aware as the next man that the press thrived on "color, catchy phrases and pithy headlines," and that the color was not all in bright and pleasant hues, the catchy phrases not all from seasoned opinions of knowledgeable observers, and the pithy headlines not all strictly factual. He did not live by public relations or for public relations, but he realized full well they had a part in winning the war.

During World War II, the communication media did not discover that Kelly Turner existed until the Savo Island battle inspired them to look for a scapegoat. Tarawa spurred them on in the scalp hunting. "Terrible Turner" kept silently working along.

Some of the correspondents who sought a war cruise on one of the "Big Flags" but could not get assigned to untaciturn Admiral Halsey's battleship flagship and did not want any assignment on Admiral Spruance's taciturn, but outstandingly effective, cruiser flagship, ended up on Rear Admiral Turner's "clumsy waddling old Grace Liner" or Vice Admiral Turner's or Admiral Turner's new amphibious command ship.

Some of the headlines and some of the titles applied to Kelly Turner

[54] Driscoll, *Pacific Victory*, pp. 62–63.



Courtesy of Time-Life Publication

Richmond Kelly Turner as pictured by artist Boris Chaliapin on Time Magazine *cover, February 7, 1944.*

were: "fearless, irrepressible, crafty," or "tough, profane and sentimental," or the "most shot at Admiral." [55]

However, *Time, The Weekly News Magazine,* carried a Boris Chaliapin painting with a sneer on Kelly Turner's face on the cover sheet of its 7 February 1944 issue. The accompanying news article said Kelly was a "mean son-of-a-bitch" and was known as "Terrible Turner." He was "vociferous," "talking incessantly," and was "abrasive as a file." "His self confidence reportedly approached arrogance."

This February 1944 *Time* article drew the following comment to *Time Magazine* by another *Time* correspondent who had ridden with Kelly Turner during the Marshall campaign.

David Hulburd
News Bureau
Time Magazine
Time & Life Bldg
Rockefeller Center
New York City

KWAJALEIN ATOLL, February 9, 1944

Dear Dave:

Our cover story on Rear Admiral Kelly Turner in the February 7th issue played too heavily on the Admiral's reputation for harshness. I have found the nickname "Terrible" Turner to be compounded not only out of regard for his sharp mind but out of a great deal of affection. The man who called him a "mean son of a bitch" must have been a disgruntled naval officer who failed to match up to the clear-cut Turner standards, or else he said it with a smile in his voice. Of course, I am only acquainted with the Admiral as he is today, a man with a signal triumph to his credit, but from those with whom I talked in the Solomons I always received the same impression of his character that I know held—the impression of a warm, witty, caustic gentleman, who while warily respected is at the same time whole-heartedly loved.

A man who could weld such magnificent cooperation out of all the units involved in this operation, and could achieve such harmony, could not do it through creating an atmosphere of "tautness." His may not have been "happy" ships—I don't know about that—but his certainly is a "happy" amphibious force.

The Admiral's facial expressions are, to my eyes, very indicative of his character. His eyebrows do not bettle, they twitch expressively as he talks, and rather humorously. His eyes, behind his spectacles, can, I suppose, be icy, but most of the time they are keen and warm. His mouth, while it can be severe, is always ready to break into a smile that eased the blow. I have seen

[55] (a) Bernard J. McQuaid; (b) Leif Erickson.

him "blow up" a junior officer and I was taken in, till I saw the look in his eye and the smile that finally came. There was no joke about the "blowing up," but he is aware of men's sensitivities and he recognizes their abilities even when they occasionally annoy him. His men admit he is tough—he admits it himself—but they love to work for him. An aviation officer says that often when he feels that he has just gotten a grip on the stone wall of a problem, someone comes along to trample his fingers—it is Turner, who has already surmounted the problem. 'That Turner, what a wonderful guy' is a typical Army comment, 'you're never conscious of the fact that he's Navy. You think of him simply as the boss of the show, and he's a hell of a good boss.'

Rear Admiral Kelly Turner is today one of the most popular commanders in the Pacific Theatre. Army, Navy, Marines—all the men serving under him feel that they are serving under a brilliant leader and a real Character, a Character whom they not only respect but also love.

Sincerely,
William H. Chickering
War Correspondent
Time Magazine
303 Stangenwald Bldg.
Honolulu, Hawaii

Chickering was thoughtful enough to give a copy of his letter to one of the officers in the FIFTHPHIBFOR STAFF, who gave it to the writer.

Another observer of the public relations problem during this period opined:

> RKT made a conscious decision that the day was not long enough to give all aspects of the war their full due. He decided the personal public relations aspect was one part that could be sloughed off without hurting anyone but himself. He just didn't give a tinker's damn about that happening.[56]

Kelly Turner toward the end of World War II told a newspaperman who was on his staff, and who served with him through six major amphibious campaigns in other than a public relations capacity:

> Of all command problems, public relations are the most difficult.[57]

And Admiral Turner told this recorder:

> It's the small fraction of correspondents who lack the necessary character to stand up to the temptation of making a headline which causes real public relations problems in war. Call a man a S.O.B. and the copywriter may give you a headline on page 1. Call a man tough or a driver, or say he has brains,

[56] Kauffman.

[57] Interview with Captain Charles W. Weaver, Jr., USNR, now publisher of the Nashua Telegraph, 5 Aug. 1964. Hereafter Weaver.

your article may have to take its place on overall merit. It's a great temptation.[58]

Admiral Turner showed his wisdom in the public relations field during his retirement years by penning the following regarding General H. M. Smith's articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* on the amphibious campaigns of the Pacific War:

> You may be surprised to learn that Smith's articles did not make me explode. . . .
>
> I clearly remember the horrible Sampson-Schley battle, which brought great discredit to both—and to the entire Navy. None of that stuff for me, thank you.[59]

TURNER'S SECRET

Admiral Turner had one secret which, in 1960, he was willing to get into the record. He had confided it to Admiral Spruance, with whom this writer checked, and perhaps he had confided it to others.

The secret was that Rear Admiral Turner had lost his job as Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans on Admiral King's staff. He was told by Admiral King that he had been sacrificed to maintaining good relations with the Army planners, a sacrifice made by the Navy at the direction of the President.

Admiral Turner related the matter as follows:

> In February 1942, after a long series of bitter discussions at the Joint Planning level, and mainly over the establishment or build-up of our bases along the line of communications to Australia, I was called into Admiral King's office and told that General Marshall had complained about what I said and the manner in which I had said it in the Joint Planners' Committee meetings. General Marshall specifically had suggested to Admiral King that Joint Planning would be facilitated by providing a new senior Navy member of the Joint Planning Committee. He told me that he had told General Marshall, at least for the moment, 'no.'
>
> Admiral King said that he backed my position in the build-up of bases matter to the hilt, but please try to keep it clean and not to state that the Army planners were dumb, dam dumb, or g.d. dumb, that we had to persuade them to see things, not clobber them or cut them to pieces. He knew that it was difficult to convince them, but the job had to be done.
>
> I said a lot of things—but ended up by saying, and I meant it, that I would give my best to the soft answer. And I did try, and for awhile thought I was

[58] Turner.
[59] RKT to HWH, letter, 28 Nov. 1948.

succeeding. But late in March, I was called in again by Admiral King and told that General Marshall had made the recommendation to the President for a change in the person of the Navy Senior Planner on the Joint Staff. The President had directed him to make the change, and I would have to go, much to his personal regret. To say I was broken up by this is to put it lightly.

In the later years of the Pacific War, whenever Admiral King and I were together alone, he would always ask me with a smile:

'How's the Army's greatest single contribution to the War in the Pacific?'

And I would always reply:

'Fine. The greatest favor that anyone ever did me.' [60]

One of Rear Admiral Turner's senior subordinates in the Plans Division, and a brilliant and effective officer who later held the same detail of Assistant Chief of Staff Plans to Admiral King, opined when asked whether he had any background knowledge of the reason for Rear Admiral Turner's change of duty:

> As you remember, he was intent on getting to sea, and I think was a little impatient, to say the least, at having to work with the young crop of generals which the Army was turning out so fast. He was glad to let me struggle with it and was even more glad to see Cooke come to take over from him.[61]

QUICK DEATH

When Admiral Turner died, at the home of Colonel Warren T. Clear, U. S. Army (Retired), near Monterey, California, while having lunch on Lincoln's Birthday, 1961, a national magazine carried the findings of the coroner that death had been due to a chicken bone sticking in his throat.

Some six months later, his regular physician made this statement, some of which, from its nature, was hearsay:

> Admiral Turner died of a coronary occlusion despite the coroner's finding that he died of a stuck chicken bone in his throat.
>
> I had been attending Admiral Turner for several years. He had had one previous heart attack, when he lost consciousness out in his yard. He lay in the yard for an unknown length of time and when he regained consciousness, he was able to walk inside to a lounge and lay down.
>
> On the Sunday he died, February 12th, he had already complained to his host, Colonel Clear, of a pain in his chest while they were enjoying the view from the Colonel's lawn. When the pain went away, lunch was served. Sud-

[60] Turner.

[61] Bieri. Captain Bieri, Assistant Plans Officer from February 1942. He took over the Plans Division when Rear Admiral Cooke fleeted up to Deputy Chief of Staff to COMINCH in October 1943.

denly the Admiral slumped in his chair, then to the floor and started to vomit. He gasped for breath a few times, and in so doing sucked the little piece of chicken bone into his windpipe along with a piece of biscuit. Both of these were found there by the coroner.[62]

Colonel Clear, the host, wrote as follows:

Until she became invalided, Harriet came to our home at least once (and oftener twice) a week for bridge and Admiral Turner about once a week for dinner here or in town. On the occasion of his last visit, on a bright, sparkling day, he looked over Monterey Bay, Carmel Bay, and the three mountain ranges to be seen from our living room and exclaimed: 'This is the most beautiful homesite in the world. I want to keep on living when I get up here.'

One evening he came up when the moon was rising over the Santa Lucias in the East, and the sun was sinking in the Pacific and said:

'I never thought I would see anything bigger than the Pacific Ocean but this clear sky above us is just beyond measurement or calculation.'

He insisted on sitting out on the terrace until eleven thirty that night, lost in quiet contemplation. As I stated, when he arrived the last time on the hill, he said: 'I want to keep on living when I get up here.' But an hour later, when the subject of Harriet's last terrible months and years came up he said:

'Its knocked something out of me. I'm not going to live very long. I've become more aware of that the last month.'

He made a similar remark to Admiral Spruance a day or so before that. I would not say he was melancholic or depressed; rather, it seemed, introspective and resigned to the prospect of passing on. He was not well. We could see a month to month deterioration physically and he sometimes groped for words in conversation and would give up trying to finish an occasional sentence.

He had had a drink at his home while I waited to bring him to our home the day of his death, and when he arrived he asked my wife for another. We talked for about an hour and then sat down to a broiled chicken luncheon. He and I were discussing the role of the submarine and plane in future warfare and the contemplated movement of large bodies of troops from continent to continent by air. He was very lucid and quoted figures to show the tonnage required to maintain a fighting man overseas (food, shelter, ammo., armor, vehicles, hospitalization, etc.), and then he said:

'They can never get away from the old surface ship, whose broad bottom compresses the water and is an aid to her burden carrying. A thousand years from now she will not be out of fashion, if you have to ship soldiers and their 'keep' overseas. The 'fly-boys' believe what they say but they don't have all the facts at their finger tips.'

Then he went on to clarify his comment by saying:

'Of course they may all just stay where they are and do each other in by

[62] Interview with Dr. Mast Wolfson, Professional Building, Monterey, California, 7 Oct. 1961.

ICBM, but I think they will still have to occupy their beaten enemy's territory to impose their terms on him, and that means shipping the soldier overseas, hundreds of thousands of him, probably. The water will carry the freight again in WW III. At the start or the end of the donnybrook.'

Gradually his voice weakened and several times he had to stop, each time breathing heavily and with apparent effort. I asked: 'Kelly, are you ill?' He shook his head, took a small piece of chicken, was chewing it, and suddenly *threw* his right arm across his chest, striving to rise. Then he fell sideways to the floor, without a sound. I felt of his pulse and put my hand inside his shirt but could detect no heart action. He was ghastly pale but his face was not contorted and gave no evidence of agony or pain. I ran to the phone and got Dr. Mast Wolfson, President of the Monterey Heart Association and one of our greatest heart men, and our oldest (in terms of association) friend in this area. He left his lunch at once and I drove down halfway to Monterey to direct him over a freshly made piece of road which cut some distance off his trip—total trip about two miles. When he arrived at my home, Mary was in a state of shock and the Admiral was where I had placed a pillow under his head. Dr. Wolfson at once gave him artificial respiration. His trachea were clear as we could hear the air leaving his lungs.

Later, at the autopsy, ordered by Dr. Wolfson, a small piece of chicken was found in the Admiral's mouth, or back of his teeth, but Dr. Wolfson's findings is that he died of a massive coronary occlusion. We called Dr. Wolfson because he is the most competent heart man in this area, if not in the State, knew the Admiral well, and is a dedicated man who will respond at once to any call of need, night or day. One of the San Francisco papers, addicted to sensationalism, had the Admiral choking to death on an unchewed piece of chicken; an account that brought great mental anguish to my wife, but Dr. Wolfson found no evidence of the trachea being blocked. I have witnessed four sudden deaths due to heart failure and I am convinced that a failing heart and his knowledge of it, was the immediate cause of his death, and the source of his frequent asides that: 'My life is over, so why should I try to remake the world,' etc., I would say, without hesitation, that he had a premonition of approaching death.

An autopsy was performed at our, and Dr. Wolfson's, insistence.

It is my, and Mary's, solid opinion that Admiral Turner began to fail rapidly with Harriet's death. She died after four years of agony that had him up at all hours of the day and night ministering to her. Although the Admiral was seen by Admiral Spruance *every day* (because Admiral and Mrs. Spruance observed, with us, his deterioration), and was seen by us about every other day, either at his home, or walking the dog, or at our place, he became detached from his surroundings, lost interest in the daily papers, was discouraged by what he referred to as 'The gradual destruction of the moral fibre of our people.'

He had a strong man's love of his country. There was nothing mawkish or

maudlin in his affection for the men he commanded during the war and during his service at sea. He could be said to 'love the sailor.' Once when three sailors were so reluctant to be put in the paddy wagon while out on the town in San Francisco, that it took twelve police to convince them that the ride was necessary, the Admiral said:

'When three cops can put three battlewagon sailors in a wagon without permission I'll join the Girl Scouts of America.'

He had a delightful sense of homespun humor, appreciated by those who called him 'Terrible Turner.' He said to us once:

'I can accept rough-necks, truculence, occasional carelessness, a hundred minor shortcomings in an officer, but I won't have a 'stupid' on my staff. The stupid man cannot be entrusted with heavy responsibilities and duties, or with the lives of others. Stupidity in an officer is a permanent and total disability. It's the unforgivable fault.' [63]

BURIAL—GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL CEMETERY

Fleet Admiral Nimitz related how it came about that Kelly Turner is buried in the Golden Gate National Cemetery:

As you well know, BUPERS buries people. When I was CHBUNAV, Helen Hess, who handled all the Bureau's arrangement of funerals, said to me:

'Why don't people plan ahead in connection with their burial?'

When I came to retire in the 12th Naval District, I remembered her remark and looked around. I found the Presidio Burial Grounds filled. I went out to the Golden Gate Cemetery at San Bruno, and the caretaker there said, 'I have just the place for you, a high spot in the center of the cemetery.' I wrote to Admirals Spruance and Turner and asked them if they were interested in being buried at the apex of the war dead in the Golden Gate Cemetery. When Harriet Turner became very ill, Kelly wrote to me and said, 'Is the offer still good?' I said it was and she was buried there and Kelly soon followed.[64]

On 13 September 1952, Fleet Admiral Nimitz wrote to the Chief of Naval Personnel:

While I fully understand and appreciate the decision of the Quartermaster General to make no grave site reservations in the Golden Gate National Cemetery for other officers, I earnestly request that Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, USN (Retired), and Admiral R. K. Turner, USN (Retired) upon their deaths be given grave sites adjoining those which have been reserved for

[63] Colonel Warren T. Clear, USA (Ret.), to GCD, letter, 10 Nov. 1961.

[64] Nimitz.

Mrs. Nimitz and me. This request is made because I firmly believe that our success in the Pacific during World War II was due in a very large measure to the splendid service rendered the Nation by these two officers, and it is fitting that they enjoy the same privilege granted to me in choosing their final resting place close to the Service personnel who died in the Pacific.[65]

SUMMARY

The many distinguished seniors who were called upon to make appraisals of Richmond Kelly Turner had many kind things to say of his talents, but as he matured they most frequently mentioned his intelligence, his planning ability, his drive and his devotion to duty. During World War II, they mentioned his fighting spirit, the will to win, and his power of decision. His was the unusual combination of fighting spirit, operational acumen, and logistical long-headedness. This combination was a scarce commodity, even in a four-year war.

As one writer eulogized:

> So with a far-from-desirable logistic situation, and with the expectation of strong resistance, perhaps even full [Japanese] naval strength, the audacity of the Guadalcanal operation was evidenced in a bold seizing of the initiative. The principal credit for this probably should go to Rear Admiral R. K. Turner, who was ever in the forefront in planning, directing, and carrying out an operation with skill, persistence, drive and great courage. He thoroughly understood the difficulty of the support problem and worked unceasingly with all concerned in logistics, as he did with troop and combat ship commanders. He not only could and did think in the large, he could also, when necessary, attend to small details such as procuring kegs of nails or bundles of steel landing mat. Reverses or confused action did not discourage him, but made him only the more persistent in having the action improved. His far-seeing knowledge of the preparation in logistics in his campaigns throughout the war further served to mark him as the greatest of all amphibious commanders.[66]

Richmond Kelly Turner was the only naval officer this scribe ever served with who knew all the details and all the broad picture, and never got them confused.

Abraham Lincoln is quoted as having replied to the Missouri Committee of Seventy in 1864:

> I desire so to conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the end,

[65] CWN/RRM/hn to CNP, Ser 3 of 13 Sep. 1952.

[66] Carter, *Beans, Bullets and Black Oil*, p. 28.

> . . . I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside me.

Admiral Turner was a great reader and may have read these words, or he may not have. But in any case he believed that the rarest gift that God bestows on any man is the capacity for decision. He knew that he had that gift, and he sought to exercise it for the good of his country and his Navy in a way which would still leave him a friend of himself.

And so with a final quote from a most distinguished shipmate of Kelly Turner's who lies not too far from him on the same hill overlooking the far reaches of the Pacific Ocean, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, I bring this documented study to a close.

> Bill Halsey was a Sailor's Admiral and Spruance, an Admiral's Admiral, but Kelly Turner was a Fighting Admiral.[67]

EPILOGUE

In Chapter VI, a quote from a letter to the Director of Naval History written by Admiral Turner in 1950, had the following opinion and advice:

> I believe it would be an equally bad thing for the Navy to publish a similar controversial book, written from the point of view of the Navy alone. No one Service invented amphibious warfare. The Marines contributed much (patterned on Japanese methods) to its development in recent years. But so also did the Navy, including Naval Aviation. Furthermore, beginning in 1940, the Army contributed a great deal. We should not forget that the biggest operation of all—Normandy—was very largely a U. S. Army and British affair. The Marines had nothing to do with the European and African landings, and the U. S. Navy was not the controlling element.[68]

This book has attempted to provide the viewpoints of operational participants of the other Services, as well as of naval participants, on various issues where the viewpoints of the Services were markedly different; and the viewpoint of other naval individuals, as well as the Turner viewpoint, when these were markedly different.

It takes more than several people and many, many operational happenings to manufacture either a first-class victory or a major disaster in a World War.

Richmond Kelly Turner was one of the "more than several" people "who manufactured our Pacific Victory," after undergoing a "major disaster" at Savo Island.

[67] Nimitz.

[68] RKT to Chief of the Division of Naval Records and History, letter, 20 Nov. 1950.

APPENDIX A

USS Richmond K. Turner

And so, in 1964, the Navy named a new ship after its chief amphibious commander during the island-hopping campaigns of the Pacific War.

Only it really didn't, because few of the hundreds of thousands of sailormen, soldiers, airmen, and Marines who sailed stalwartly forth with Kelly Turner to far away and little known islands would recognize their leader by the name Richmond K. Turner. They knew him as Kelly Turner, which was the way he signed his pay checks, except that he put an 'R' at the start.

The Marines, God bless them, were there at the commissioning ceremony on 13 June 1964, to rivet a plaque on the quarterdeck of the guided missile frigate for all to see and to read:

DEDICATED
TO
THE MEMORY OF
ADMIRAL RICHMOND KELLY TURNER
COMMANDER, JOINT EXPEDITIONARY AND AMPHIBIOUS
FORCES, PACIFIC AREA, WORLD WAR II
INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP FROM
GUADALCANAL TO OKINAWA
THE U. S. MARINE CORPS.

Kelly Turner was not too tough for the Marines. They thrived on S.O.B.'s, but S.O.B.'s who were brainy and purposeful in the cause of this country. They recognized that Kelly Turner had many of the Marines' more prized leadership qualities.

The presenter of the plaque, Brigadier General Joseph O. Butcher, USMC, made a typical Marine talk—short and meaningful. He said:

> Through Admiral Turner's exceptional tactical handling of amphibious forces and his understanding and consideration for their capabilities, Marine Corps amphibious units were successfully put ashore on Guadalcanal, New Georgia, Tarawa, Guam, Saipan and Iwo Jima, to name only a few. These have all become glowing names in the pages of Naval and Marine Corps history.
>
> General Holland M. Smith who was closely associated with Admiral Turner and who served with him in amphibious operations for over two

> years as Commander Fifth Amphibious Corps and later Commanding General Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, recently wrote me that, in his opinion, the Admiral 'was one of the finest naval officers he has ever known.'
>
> During World War II, Admiral Turner was cited several times for his daring initiative in handling the ever-changing complexities of his assignments. Therefore I think it especially appropriate that one of the newest complex surface ships of the United States Fleet, a guided missile frigate, is being commissioned the *Richmond K. Turner.*

The Navy's senior representative at the Philadelphia Navy Yard at the commissioning ceremony was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Logistics, The Honorable Kenneth E. Belieu. He said that "Kelly Turner was a man of dedication," and that "he will be long remembered for his command of the amphibious forces which engaged in the successful occupation of Iwo Jima."

His speech indicated that Kelly Turner's command of the Pacific Fleet amphibous forces at Okinawa, the longest and toughest operation of the Pacific War, had escaped his notice or that of his speech writer. This indicates how fleeting fame can be, for few who were with Kelly Turner at Okinawa will forget him on the voice radio during the moments of kamikaze attacks. One commander recalled:

> I worked under him several times during the war when I commanded a ship, or ships, in his attack force, and it was (nearly) always a pleasure. As you probably know, he liked to handle the command voice circuit himself, and his voice was easily recognizable. In tight situations, it was very steadying to hear that voice take over.[1]

The Okinawa operation was Kelly Turner's command which made him a four star admiral, and he was proud of it. He told me:

> Fighting out from under the heaviest Japanese air attacks on our sea-borne amphibious forces at Okinawa, was my proudest achievement during the war.[2]

The first Commanding Officer of the *Richmond K. Turner* was Captain Douglas C. Plate, U. S. Navy—out of the Class of 1942. His remarks at the commissioning ceremony were to the point.

> Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner disliked the inefficient and scorned the lazy. He had great faith in his Country—and in his Navy. He did not spare himself in his devotion to either. We could ask for no better example and no higher standards.

And with that summation, Kelly Turner would be happy, and the first to say "Amen."

[1] Rear Admiral J. R. Lannom, USN (Ret.) to GCD, letter, 21 Feb. 1964.
[2] Turner.

How much confusion naming the DLG-20 the *Richmond K. Turner* would cause, could have been predicted by any of Kelly Turner's boys. The Commanding Officer of the DLG-20 kindly furnished copies of the following despatches:

From *USS Turner*
To Chief of Naval Operations

Improper Message Addressing

1. During past two weeks *USS Turner* (DDR-834) has been recipient of 19 messages obviously intended for *USS R. K. Turner* (DLG-20). This situation has necessitated numerous services and has resulted in inordinate delay in effecting final delivery.

2. This situation has also been noted in the addressing of mail by various bureaus and commands.

3. Respectfully request that the existence of two *Turners* in the ATLANTIC FLEET AREA BE BROUGHT TO ATTENTION OF ALL CONCERNED.

From *USS Richmond K. Turner*
To Chief of Naval Operations

Mail, Message Addressing

1. *Richmond K. Turner* beginning to experience problems similar to those outlined by reference. Incorrect addressing of mail by supply activities forwarding critical spares particularly harmful.

2. Inherent part of problem is length of DLG name which many innocents have penchant for shortening to *Turner*.

3. As indicated by reference, situation will ameliorate when *Richmond K. Turner* shifts to Pacific, but this will also lengthen turn around time for misaddressed correspondence.

4. Recommend acceptance in message traffic and informal correspondence for this ship of initials quote RK unquote Turner. Feel this no disrespect to late Admiral who seldom used name Richmond and who achieved fame as Admiral Kelly Turner.

Merely for the record, it is noted here that DLG-20 is a guided missile frigate 533 feet long and of 7,650 full load displacement tons. She carries an anti-aircraft armament of two dual-purpose missile launchers and two 3-inch 50-caliber twin-gun mounts. Additionally, she can fight with an anti-submarine rocket launcher and two triple mount torpedo tubes. In July 1964, twenty officers were attached to her and 331 enlisted men were listed in her crew. These figures are a bit different than the 155-ton *Davis* (TB-12), or the 480-ton TBD *Preble* in which Kelly Turner learned to go to sea and like it.

APPENDIX B

A Note on Primary Sources

(1) The Staff Log of Commander Amphibious Force of the South Pacific Force of the Pacific Fleet had an auspicious beginning on July 18, 1942. It was written by the Watch Officers of the Staff and reviewed and corrected by the Chief of Staff for the first three months of the Command's existence.

Frequently, at this stage, the Staff Log contains important operational information obtained from radio direction finders, or cryptographically, by the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet and relayed to COMPHIB-FORSOPAC. It also contains at-the-moment reasoning behind certain important operational decisions. It was a proper Staff Log.

Commencing in mid-September 1942, the character of the Staff Log started its deterioration into a glorified quartermaster's notebook, with a quartermaster noting a few of the more important visible events occurring, and the Staff Officer signing what had been written.

The last signature of Captain Thomas G. Peyton, the first Chief of Staff, occurs on 15 November 1942. Summaries of important despatches received during the day continued sketchily on until 8 April 1943, and then disappeared completely from the Staff Log.

Staff Logs of the Fifth Amphibious Force carried on in this innocuous and deliquescing manner.

(2) Copies of the early Operation Plans issued for the Guadalcanal Operation by Rear Admiral Turner as Commander Task Force 62 are hard to find. Presumably, without malice aforethought to future historians, CTF 62 directed all hands to "destroy by burning, without report, all copies of Operation Plan AR-42 (Rehearsal) and all copies of Tentative Operation Plan A2-42." The order was well obeyed, as was the subsequent one for "all holders," except a few seniors, to destroy the actual Operation Plan A3-42.[1]

[1] CTF 62 letter, FE 25/A16-3/A4-3 Ser 0013 of 30 Jul. 1942.

APPENDIX C
The Last Word

The following two letters were received from Admiral John L. McCrea, U.S. Navy (Retired), after the manuscript had gone to the Government Printing Office. They are included in their entirety.

107 Crafts Road
Chestnut Hill, Mass. 02167
January 21, 1970

Dear George,

Yesterday I had the pleasure of lunching with Walter Whitehill [Librarian, Athenaeum Library, Boston]. During our conversation he told me that you are working on a biography of Kelly Turner. As for that bit of news I say Hooray and Hooray! Richmond Kelly Turner was quite a guy and I'm glad that someone who has the talent to do so has undertaken to make a record of his many accomplishments.

When I went to Washington (ex-*Pennsylvania*) in Sept. 1940, I found myself working on a special project for Stark [Chief of Naval Operations], 'Are We Ready,' which had originated in the General Board. For want of a better place for me I was given quarters in the War Plans Division. Crenshaw had headed up that Division but he had departed and sometime in October, I think, Kelly showed up as Crenshaw's relief. My office was next door to Kelly's and so situated that anyone who wanted to see him had to cross my line of vision. Kelly was astounded at the condition the War Plans were in and said so in a loud tone of voice. Oddly enough, I had never seen him until we met in Operations. He made—as always—an instant impression. The second day he was there, he stopped by my desk. 'McCrea, I'm going in my office and shut the door and write a plan for the war that is coming. Don't let anyone by to disturb me.' Well that was that. He and I got off to a great start. He kept using me on odds and ends despite the fact that I was working for Stark and no one else. He was the guy who sent me to the Pacific and Asiatic Fleets in December of 1940 to carry out the new plans WPL 45, if memory serves me correctly, and to be 'The Questions and Answer Man for those commands until they release you.' It was all a great experience and it was a pleasure to come in contact with such a quick and fine mind supported by a guy who could *make* a decision and ride with it.

Shortly after—well, some three or four months after—I got back from my Pacific jaunt, Stark moved into his office and I was present at practically all of Kelly's conferences with Stark. They were pretty well attended. Admiral Sexton, the head of the General Board, was invariably in attendance. Kelly, first, last and always, was sure war was coming. To him it was *urgent*

that we get war minded. My observation was that the Navy was far more war minded than the Army—witness the Navy getting its dependents out of the Orient in November 1940, whereas the Army didn't bring its dependents out until August 1941, and then by President Roosevelt *telling* Gen. Marshall to bring them home.

Kelly was sure that when war came, in the end, we would prevail. He would hold forth at length that we must *not destroy* the Japanese Empire—'We mustn't reduce then to a fourth rate power because we will need them after the war to help maintain a balance of power in that area.' He would talk in this vein often.

The conference that sticks with me was the one having to do with the despatch that went to the Pacific and Asiatic Commands on 27 November, or thereabouts, to alert them as to nearness of hostilities. Kelly brought his draft of the despatch 'up front.' As I recall it, the opening sentence was 'This is a war warning.' Both Sexton and Stark demurred—thought it too strong, etc. Kelly countered vigorously, 'you can't discount the possibility of early hostilities.' 'But it's too strong.' 'Under the circumstances we can't say less,' said Kelly. And so it went back and forth and in the end Kelly had his way. And how happy the front office was that he had his way when a few days later came the attack on Pearl.

For weeks prior to P.H. [Pearl Harbor] Kelly had been after me to see if we could slow down Stark's procession of visitors. But Admiral Stark was patient and gentle and there was a steady stream of Bureau Chiefs and others to see him. Kelly couldn't tolerate that. Admiral Bowen was his particular bête noire. Even Stark got a bit irked with the frequency and the length of Bowen's visits. He finally told me to get the word to Bowen to leave his cigar outside. Mike Robinson wasn't far behind Bowen for frequency and length of visits. The one guy who really got in and out was Ben Moreell--and what a man he was!

Well, when P.H. came to us, Kelly took things in his own hands. I left the Navy Dept. about 3:00 a.m., 8 Dec. I was in civilian clothes all that Sunday afternoon and night. I had to dash home, freshen up and shift into uniform. When I got back in the office about 8:30 in the morning there was lying on my desk a memorandum which Kelly had drafted (some 900 copies, he said) and broad-cast throughout the Department saying, in effect, that now since hostilities had begun, much as he (Stark) regretted it, he would not be as available as in the past and that those who wished to see him should call McCrea for an appointment. This arrangement was a *complete surprise* to me and I think to Stark as well. Anyway, it worked out pretty good since it was noticeable how unimportant many things were when Stark couldn't be seen until 5:00 p.m. or thereabouts.

George, forgive me for subjecting you to my awful handwriting, but my delight in finding out that you were at work on Kelly quite carried me away.

Regards and good luck to you.

John McCrea

1. When I got orders to the White House as Naval Aide, Kelly came by to see me. 'All they want you for over there is your strong back,' said he. But, really Geo. I did more than that!

2. Kelly attended the first meeting in London having to do with the U.N. [United Nations] Mrs. Roosevelt was there. K___ came charging into my office when he got back. 'Do you know Mrs. R___,' he said. 'Of course,' was my reply. 'By God,' said he, 'she's the greatest. I was so damn proud of the way she handled herself over there. She's a great American.' And with that he was gone in a breeze. He was ever thus!

February 12, 1970

Dear George,

Thank you for your letter. It has just reached me here.

I wish I had known about your Turner project earlier. Just by chance Walter Whitehill told me about it. This prompted me to write you. The last time I saw Kelly was in late May 1949 in Monterey. He was lying on his belly picking bugs off a rose bush. I was in M[onterey] en route East and stopped off to see my daughter who was married to Dick Niles, on the staff of the P.G. School. Tom Casey (C.O) gave a party for me and Kelly came. The next day I dropped by for a drink--at his invitation! And that was when I caught him under the rose bush. I enjoyed working with him *so much.* I was really not part of his War Plans but he picked my brain and I his, much, of course, to my profit.

When I was sent to the White House, Kelly came by to see me. It went something like this: 'Don't think they want you over there for your brains. They want you because you are six feet tall and are known to have a strong back.' We understood each other well and it was a pleasure to be at the biting end of some of his wit--inspired by drink or otherwise.

Do you recall Fuzzy Theobald's 'Truth About Pearl Harbor' in which he flatly accused F.D.R. of deliberately getting us into war? It appeared first, in its entirety, in *U.S. News and World Report.* I sent a copy post haste to K. T. He thanked me and remarked: 'It is just the sort of thing I would have thought Theobald would write had I known he was writing a book.'

Good old K.T. what a delight it was to serve with him—firm, decisive, a decision maker and above all *a doer.*

Much luck to you, George, and I do hope our paths may cross one day *and soon.*

Sincerely,
John McCrea

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(1) Most details of the amphibious operations in which Admiral Turner commanded the amphibious forces are indexed either under the code name of the operation or under one of the common features of amphibious operations as listed in (3) below

(2) The code-named operations and their general geographical location are as follows:
CATCHPOLE (Eniwetok—Marshall Islands)
CLEANSLATE (Russell Islands—Lower Solomons)
DETACHMENT (Iwo Jima—Volcano Islands)
FLINTLOCK (Kwajalein, Roi-Namur—Marshall Islands)
FORAGER (Saipan, Guam, Tinian—Marianas)
GALVANIC (Makin, Tarawa—Gilbert Islands)
ICEBERG (Okinawa—Ryukyu Islands)
TOENAILS (New Georgia—Central Solomons)
WATCHTOWER (Guadalcanal, Tulagi—Lower Solomons)

(3) The following common aspects of an amphibious operation are listed by subject in the general index and, depending upon the happenstance of each operation, indexed in considerable detail for each of the code-named operations Generally, this indexing is not repeated in the detailed index listing of each code-named operation.

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Air raids (attacks/strikes)
Air reconnaissance
Anti-submarine
Bombardment, gun
Carrier operations
Close air support
Close gunfire support
Command organization
Command problems
Communications
Control of boat waves
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Operation plans
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Scheme of Maneuver
Strategic considerations

(4) To locate an individual Army, Army Air (Corps) Force, or Marine Corps unit, look under the general heading of "Army," "Army Air (Corps) Force," or "Marine Corps," where these individual Service Units are gathered together. Naval units are listed under the appropriate alphabetical letter.

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